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Next Issue....

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 "THE AFFAIR OF LOGICAL LUNATICS"
 WILL SEE PRINT HERE.

ONE OR TWO HEAVY INTERVIEWS/PRO-
 FILES

A FEW MORE SURPRISES, THE REGU-
 LAR COLUMNS, FOUR HUNDRED BOOK
 REVIEWS...ALL KINDS FUNNY CAR-
 TOONS...DEEP THOUGHTS AND WIS-
 DOM FROM---

BUT WHY DOES
 GEIS REALLY
 WANT MY OLD
 ZIP CODE ?



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ALIEN THOUGHTS BY THE EDITOR

IT'S TIME TO BEGIN IN SPITE OF 107°
HEAT OUTSIDE AND AN ALMOST OVER-
POWERING DESIRE FOR ANOTHER COLD
BEER....

Sharp-eyed and sharp-minded readers will have noted (I hope with amusement) that I forgot to put myself as Editor and Publisher in the masthead last issue. Only Paulette was credited as Associate Editor.

Oh, well. In #39 I messed up the volume/issue number. Nobody seemed to notice.

And in #40 I wrote:

"I aim for the 10th of the month of Feb., May, July, November as the day I want to get these completed layouts to the printer."

My brain skipped a few spaces when I typed that.

The printer deadline is the 10th of the months of January, April, July, and October.

The deadline for written and art material for a given issue is the first of the months of January, April, July, and October. The only person who regularly has to deal with this deadline is Elton Elliott, ace sf/fantasy news columnist, and he of course regularly is late.

I tell you, the life of an editor/publisher is a series of crises usually only barely escaped, averted, and dodged. Sometimes a crisis makes a direct hit and splatters a deadline all over the office.

The U.S. Postal Service, ever intent on having its way...not letting snow nor sleet nor dark of night slow it on its appointed determination to impose a nine-digit zipcode upon us all, unfazed by a law passed by Congress to stop it from preparing or implementing a nine-digit zipcode...the Postal Service has sent out about 190,000 notices to business mailers informing us of our new, extra 4 digits.

My new code is 97211-0408.

But don't use it. Congress forbids it and the Postal Service won't have the new machines for reading these new zips until 1983. And you'll only confuse the human zipcode routers presently sorting zips.

I shudder to think of the extra work these new zips (if ever imposed on me as a second class permit holder) will require when I bundle and sack the SFR mailing every three months.

Listen, how about a monthly SFR mailed first class, 8 pages.... All



I'd have to do is address and stamp. No sorting...no bundling...no damn #3 mail sacks to hassle with....
Sigh.

MEN OF ACHIEVEMENT (Ninth Edition) wants me. All I have to do is fill out a three-page form and return it to Cambridge, England. The trouble with that is that I HATE and RESIST filling out forms, especially autobiographical and achievement forms for these yearly con books.

They are cons if the designated "Biographee" is required or expected to buy a copy of the edition in which his entry appears.

MEN OF ACHIEVEMENT #9 is offered in a Grand Edition at \$59., or a wowie De Luxe Edition at \$97.50.

I did, a couple years ago fill out a couple of these forms---an Author book and a WHO'S WHO in America variety...but never bought a copy of the books. And I refuse to update the damn entries.

If this is the price of "fame" ---forget it. If posterity ever decides I have value one way or another, the "gaps" and "mysteries" in my life will give desperate scholars something to do.

TRANSAMERICA Financial Services is willing, nay eager to let me borrow up to \$2500.00 by mail. They are such nice, obliging people, so itchy to help, they even sent a form for me to fill out. In fact, with a little more [easy] negotiation and investigation of me...and a bit more time...I can apply for and probably borrow up to \$50,000.00.

Of course, down there it says there's a 19.00% annual interest rate involved. Borrow \$2500.00 and pay it back in 36 equal monthly instalments of \$91.64 each. There's a finance charge of \$799.04. Total of payments, \$3,299.04.

They don't mention what will happen to you if you can't make any of those 36 payments.

Oh, wait, yes, in the fine print it says:

"If the entire amount is not paid in full by the final payment due date, the remaining balance will draw interest at the Agreed Rate of Charges, until paid in full."

"I may pay any part of the principal balance in advance. If I fail to pay any installment on time, I will be in default and you may declare the entire principal balance and accrued charges due and payable at once. If, after default, you refer my account to an attorney who is not your salaried employee, I will pay reasonable attorney fees."

This used to be called loan sharking, didn't it? A man, suddenly out of work, could miss a payment, be declared in default...and after a while end up owing dear, kind, considerate Transamerica an extra thousand bucks or three, including 'reasonable' attorneys fees.

What is that old, quaint, laughable dictum our grandfathers used to follow?

Oh, yes, I remember now:
NEITHER A BORROWER NOR A LENDER BE.

Let me mention that this offer-to-lend by Transamerica was sent unsolicited to me. And probably to thousands of others. I wonder how many people are in that 19% debt net?

Norman Darden is a literary agent...I guess. He recently sent me a package of things written by Frederick Lynch. These included a biographical essay by Lynch (who is a professor of Sociology at Cal. State U.), a long article "Occult Establishment" or "Deviant Religion"? The Rise and Fall of a Modern Church of Magic, and chapter 13 from Lynch's occult novel, FORTUNE'S FOOL.

I doubt that agent Darden has ever seen a copy of SFR.

I reeled away from the dense, badly photocopied, academic prose of the article (copied from its appearance in the JOURNAL FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION) and began reading Chapter 13.

Lynch's style and techniques in fiction are (judged from this sample chapter) adequate. There are wisps and flatulences of lingering amateurisms, clumsy dialog, awkward narrative. There is no

grace, little control, no power. But he plods along, dropping turds of characterization and "clever" description, thinking them pearls.

Barden describes FORTUNE'S FOOL as 'scientific science fiction.' The novel seems to be a rendering of one man's occult experiences among academic types.

I pass.

Beware of experts jealous of their 'turf'. If censorship comes to this country it may slide in the back door in this fashion:

"THE OREGONIAN--Aug. 15, 1981
Geology writer won't face charges

By David Whitney

"First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech are alive and well in Multnomah County.

"So said the Multnomah County district attorney's office in a letter rejecting a request by the state Board of Geologist Examiners that a Portland Physicist be prosecuted for writing a geology-related article without being a geologist.

"At issue was a report by Norman Buske on the dangers posed by the Mount St. Helens volcano to the Trojan nuclear power plant near Rainier.

"The report, which said the volcanic activity of the mountain was not considered in the safety design of the power plant when it was built, was prepared for Physicians for Social Responsibility, an anti-nuclear activist group.

"The board wanted the district attorney's office to proceed under a state law saying "no person shall publicly practice, or offer to publicly practice geology in this state" unless he or she is registered or otherwise exempted from the law."

In a letter to the board the chief deputy district attorney said public discussion of nuclear power, pro or con, is protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, adding,

"If the discussion of the geologic safety of nuclear power plants could be suppressed under (the law) with the threat of one year in jail, then the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech would have little meaning in this community."

And the letter went on to point out that if Buske were prosecuted, then so too would journalists have to be.

That's one method of censorship. Another is local (or state, or federal) licensing of writers. The licensing board would determine who could write and (indirectly) what was written and published.

So far these back door routes to censorship have been squelched,

but in a period of national crisis or fevered pressure-group power in Congress and the administration of the moment, these and other methods could be made legal.

There is never a shortage of selfish, one-track minded ethical and moral idiots, seeking ever more power over people, who will be ever ready and eager to use any path to attempt mind/information control "in the public interest" during "the emergency".

The August announcement by Paul C. Allen that the #41 (October) issue of his FANTASY NEWSLETTER would be its last is not exactly surprising to me.

I suspected it would happen, sooner or later. The only question was when. He lasted far longer than I expected.

The key element is, as he writes in his 'A Note to Subscribers', "In essence, FN is an undertaking that requires too much time and effort and produces too little to make it worthwhile. ... FN's sales peaked about six months ago and have plateaued since that time.



Offhand, I would say that it has reached its maximum growth potential...which is unfortunately inadequate to make it financially worthwhile."

Paul tried in every way he could to bring FANTASY NEWSLETTER to the attention of potential subscribers and bookstore buyers. He advertised extensively, placed the magazine with wide-ranging sf and fantasy distributors, and conscientiously published on time month after month with astonishing professional regularity.

He produced a lovely, varied, professional looking magazine, attracted advertisers, and made his back issues available to new subscribers.

He made all the right moves, had a fine package--and ran smack into the wall of inherently limited readership. And his costs--even with a high cover price and high subscription rate--were too much to allow a decent profit and create a willingness to continue.

Laborers of love are great--as long as the love holds up. Laborers

of commercialism are rightly abandoned when the payoff shrinks or disappears.

In the small press world, and in the sf fan publishing world of semi-prozines, love and money fuel the efforts--up to a point. Paul reached his point of no returns and empty love tank, and I suspect other ambitious fan efforts will disappear in the coming months as a declining economy adds another element to the adverse side of the ledger.

DAYS LATER.... Being of sound mind I wrote Fritz Leiber and offered him pages in SFR if he wished to continue his fantasy column in SFR, since FANTASY NEWSLETTER was dead. [I remember well how the vultures swooped in upon the columnists of a previous incarnation of SFR when I ceased publication in 1971 in Santa Monica. Now, I thought, it's my turn to vultch.]

But now he writes:

"Now I know someone reads my column! Many thanks for offer, esp. as I like the outspoken, almost confessional style SF Review encourages. But now it turns out the Thomas B. Swann Fund, Florida Atlantic U., will continue the mag (FN) with Robert Collins there as editor, and my & Wagner's columns will go on. And I've agreed to stick with that. So... But much thanks anyhow, maybe I'll find something to confess to SF Review. Who knows?"

Okay. I'll wait. Fritz, of course, is always welcome in whatever form of writing.

Bill Rotsler, legendary Los Angeles fan and artist, has sent me about a dozen or so of his drawings [one of which appears on this page] with the instructions:

"Would you pass on what you don't want to use to other fanzine editors? Thank you. Latest issue [of SFR] good--but I miss the quotations. Alexis continues superb."

I have taken my cut, and so offer the balance--five drawings, let us say each--to those fan editors who want them and who send a stamped, self-addressed #10 envelope.

Those fan editors in turn are charged to offer those Rotsler drawings they cannot use to yet other fan editors.

This has been one of Bill's long-time methods of contributing to fandom for at least 20 years. Long may he sketch and cartoon!

If you'd like to go to the source, he lives at:

2014 Walnut Av.
Venice, CA 90201

If you write him and ask for fan art, be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed #10 [or larger!] envelope.

But please patronize me first.

Burt Libe, in his latest letter, asks for some discussion of the rights of writers and artists. He is outraged at some of the practices of publishers---giving piddling advances, reneging on publication, then demanding the advance back, for instance. How, he asks, are the downtrodden writers and artists to fight back? Can court action be taken without costly lawyers?

Good questions.

I have unwanted answers.

Given the structure of the capitalist publishing industry, and the inherent submissive position of the creator, the creator is almost always in the hoping/begging posture. The publisher decides who shall be rewarded (published and paid) and the publisher keeps the books---often multiple sets of books---so that the possibility of the author or artist checking actual sales figures and actual royalties due is virtually impossible. Only rarely is a publisher brought kicking and screaming to court and made to open those precious books.

This situation is operative for 99% of the creators. The 1% whose work is immensely popular and whose work sells millions---ah, those people have the leverage, the bargaining power to demand honest treatment, favorable contracts, etc.

The message is clear: be very very popular with readers/viewers, or assume and maintain The Slave Position.

And the implication for a career in writing or illustration is also clear: the odds are against you, the structure is against you, and the nature of man is against you.

Strictly on a commercial basis, you'd be better off sweeping floors for fifty years.

The publisher has too much opportunity and self-interest in cheating, underpaying, and demeaning the free-lance writer and artist.

But new, young artists and writers continue to imagine they can beat the odds. Their dreams and their talent impell them to invest years and years....

Well, I told you these weren't palatable answers. Graybeards have been telling young creators these facts-of-life for centuries. And young talents have continued to

persist in trying to beat the system.

But pay no attention to me. I have plans for this blockbuster novel, see....

A pleasant surprise this morning (9-17-81) in the mail: Steve Fabian sent two covers for SFR. His comments:

"The science fiction piece is based on one of your suggestions: Spacelife (?) eating a spacesuited human. In this case I pictured a space cloud with a concentrated core of energy (sentient) that attacks a space ship and its crew. The "creature" disassembles life forms to their basic energy particles and draws them into the core which grows larger with each "feeding".

"The second one is a fantasy drawing that I'd started to do for FANTASY NEWSLETTER when I found out that it folded. But I decided to finish it and maybe you can use it!"

I make it a firm policy never to reject Fabian covers. These two are now scheduled for the May, 1982 SFR and the August 1982 SFR. I now have a smug, satisfied sense of security.

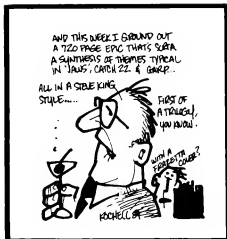
I've also received cartoons from new-to-SFR cartoonists, and a clutch of spot illos from James McQuade. Verily and literally, my art file doth runneth over. Almost forgot---four large single column Bruce Conklin nudes-with-aliens drawings that will cause some grinding of feminist teeth. I'm long past explaining or justifying using nudes in SFR: I like 'em, so I publish 'em. That dictum governs all my choices for SFR, text as well as art, naturally.

SO YOU DRAW CARTOONS? ...
TELL ME, DO YOU DO ANY
SERIOUS WORK? ...



A recent study of writers' incomes shows the usual depressing statistics.

This AP story says---
The average author in the U.S. earns less than \$5,000 per year.



[Published book authors, that is.]

Many writers are living at the poverty level and must take part-time or full-time jobs to make ends meet.

About 50% of the authors of the 2,239 authors surveyed said they held other jobs to supplement their income.

The full-time writers---those who held no other jobs and spent at least 25 hours per week at their craft: 66% said their incomes did not reach \$20,000.

The top 10% reported incomes of \$45,000 per year or more.

The top 5% said they earned \$80,000 or more.

Incomes fluctuate significantly from year to year.

This range of prosperity for writers is about the same (adjusted for inflation) as it has always been.

Writing has a somewhat glamorous image---the pipe-smoking author of the best-seller, the housewife who wrote a best-seller in her spare time---but on the whole, among those writers down in the trenches, writing is a tough shit profession. It can take you twenty or thirty years to "suddenly" hit with a ms. that turns into a big money-making book.

And then there are the Kilgore Trouts of the writing world---the hacks who grind out the genre product year after year---the old reliables who write the endless also-ran novels which fill out the publishers' lists.

But among the hacks are those---no one knows who---who will gradually or abruptly become stars. In science fiction I can think of Phil Dick, Phil Farmer, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Bob Silverberg, John Brunner.... In sf the list can go on and on.

Why, in the face of the perennial stats about average low incomes, a million or more people every year try to become professional writers is as always a mystery.

Deep character drives and talent explain those who do become selling authors. Illusion and delusion probably explain the other 99%.

If it is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan, it is an even more helpless and painful thing to be the average author.

But woethehell---there are a few compensations. And there's always that chance....

I note with a bemused eye the report in the September SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE that Robert Sheckley has resigned as fiction editor at OMNI. Sheckley reportedly had taken a three-week vacation---June 27th - July 20th and worked on his latest novel, DRAMOCLES, due to the publisher in mid-September.

Sheckley wanted a two-month leave of absence from July 21 in order to complete the book.

Ben Bova, editor of OMNI, said the sabbatical was impossible; deadlines and pressures...

So Sheckley resigned. Associate Editor Ellen Datlow has taken over as fiction editor.

I also note---with a jaundiced eye---that Ben Bova will be on an extended tour of cities to promote his new book, THE HIGH ROAD. He will be traveling from city to city---Denver, Pittsburgh, Boston, New York, Washington, DC, Philadelphia, Detroit, Houston, Dallas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Tucson, Tallahassee, Atlanta, Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Louis, Nashville, Memphis---from September 4th till October 27th. About 7-1/2 weeks. I guess nobody will miss him. All those deadlines and pressures....

I've received several semi-prozines recently and hissed with surprise and surmise at their prices.

The publishers are in a box, kind of: low circulation and high production costs dictate a high cover price in order to make any kind of profit at all.

Yet... Take THRUST #17, for instance. \$1.95 for forty pages. A thin magazine indeed.

Look at the newest STARSHIP: \$3.00 for 52 pages, sixteen of which are ads.

And TRUMPET #12---52 pages, \$3.50. SPWAO SHOWCASE---72 half-size pages for \$3.00.

PHILOSOPHICAL SPECULATIONS---60 half-size pages for \$3.00.

WEIRDBOOK #15---sixty-eight pages for \$4.50.

Special-interest items are always priced high, you say? And some

have higher costs than others, justifying higher cover prices?

Maybe. Probably. But I suspect that these prices---in an environment of ever-tighter money, higher unemployment, and forced reader selectivity---are suicidal.

As Elton Elliott makes the case in his news column this issue, sf readers are being forced to ration their sf buying in this period of economic malaise [on-crunching recession]. And that has certainly to be true when it comes to the buyers of small press items. Fans are thinking twice and buying less.

As for me, I have no trouble making ends meet, putting beans on the table, and seeing a lot of movies (admittedly at discount admission prices during bargain days) with the price of SFR at \$2.00. And as long as the paid circulation holds at about 1800 & bookstore sales of around 500, and as long as the printing bill stays at about \$1650, and the postage bills at about \$450...I'll be happy as a clam.

In fact, I urge these above-mentioned publishers to cut their prices to more realistic levels. They might survive longer that way.

Now that I've given a lot of gratuitous advice and implied greed in others...I await outraged, angry letters.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED ON PAGE 67



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SHUTTLE DOWN

By Lee Correy

Del Rey/Ballantine, Paper, \$2.25

For those who are infuriated by the Peter Principle incompetents who foul things up for those who simply want to do their jobs well, **SHUTTLE DOWN** provides plenty to both cheer and worry about. Written by a scientist obviously familiar with all aspects, national and international, of the space program, **SHUTTLE DOWN** is the near future account of an attempt to retrieve a downed U.S. space shuttle from Easter Island. The problems, both technical and political, are horrendous and all too believable. For a start, major reconstruction of the island's airstrip is necessary before the shuttle can be ferried out. The island is owned by Chile, with whom diplomatic relations are strained to begin with. The Soviets stir up trouble by hinting that the shuttle's payload is a secret military device rather than the Landsat satellite NASA claims. And finally, hundreds of media types, some with their own anti-science axes to grind, are swarming over the project. Despite -- or perhaps because of -- a number of boo-the-villain-and-cheer-the-hero stereotypes, **SHUTTLE DOWN** is as gripping and exciting as Correy's earlier **STAR DRIVER** and is occasionally reminiscent, in a compact sort of way, of Allen Drury's **ADVISE AND CONSENT** series.

ASIMOV ON SCIENCE FICTION

By Isaac Asimov
Doubleday, \$14.95

For the thousands of us who read Asimov's fascinatingly chatty articles before anything else in the magazine -- whether the magazine be

"Fantasy and Science Fiction", "Newsday" or "TV Guide" -- here are fifty-five of the things. The book is, believe it or not, his first about science fiction, but, like SF itself, it covers a vast range of subjects, including, to name just a few, tips to would-be prolific writers, a "setting-people-straight!" critique of "1984", an amusing and well-deserved putdown of the late "Battlestar Galactica" & serious and frightening comments on the world's blindness to the more obvious of SF's "predictions", such as world oil and food shortages.

DAYSTAR AND SHADOW

By James B. Johnson
DAW, Paper, \$2.25

At first glance, **DAYSTAR AND SHADOW** seems like a standard post-atomic adventure that takes place in a bleak future world where desert and supposedly radioactive "forbidden areas" cover most of the U.S. There is, however, much more. There are the legends of "Monitors", aliens who disappeared shortly after the

holocaust and who may still be watching from Earth orbit. There are the fireworms, deadly and possibly alien desert creatures that seek out and kill certain "cursed" humans. There are the "New Christians", an anti-science cult conducting a campaign to wipe out all autistics. And there are the hero and heroine, Daystar and Shadow, both of whom happen to be autistic. Despite a rather compressed ending, in which too much is explained too quickly, **DAYSTAR AND SHADOW** is a well-done, exciting mixture of Tarzan-like heroics, off-stage aliens and one of the more intriguing premises of recent years, i.e., that autism is not a disease but the next step in human evolution.

PLAYERS AT THE GAME OF PEOPLE

By John Brunner
Ballantine/Del Rey, \$2.25, paperback

Godwin Harpishield is forever thirty-two and in perfect health. The door to his infinitely variable living quarters will open onto whatever part of the world he desires. When he goes to restaurants and



stores, waiters and clerks "forget" to charge him. If he is noticed, he can use the "flex" and he will be forgotten. And he is given special rewards now and then by being allowed to live out whatever heroic act he cares to imagine. In return, he and a select and anonymous group of humans allow their bodies to occasionally be "used". Though each character has his own theory, no one knows who or what the users are, nor what the bodies are used for. Aliens playing a bizarre game? Humans from the future? Spirits? Demons? The question is never answered, but the sometimes surrealistic portrait of Harpishin and the others and their relationships to their unseen masters is as well done and fascinating as anything Brunner, whose "Stand on Zanzibar" won the Hugo in 1969, has done in recent years.

SKYROCKET STEELE

By Ron Goulart

Pocket Books, \$2.25, paperback

Except for his John Easy private eye series, I've never been a particular fan of Goulart's but this one grabbed me from the start, probably because it reminded me so much of the Easy stories.

In 1941, a prolific pulp writer named Pete Tinsley is hired by Star Spangled Studios to help script a serial about a Commando-Cody-like hero named Skrocket Steele and his battles with the aliens who blow up Earth in the serial's first chapter. Tinsley soon realizes, however, that there are more real aliens infiltrating the studio than there are in the script, including his own girl friend. The plot is almost non-existent, but if you like wisecracking, Runyonesque characters (like mobster Dime Gallardo and studio head Milton Ows), fast and funny action and absolutely nothing to make you think or worry, this could give you a pleasant hour or two, particularly if you've ever seen any of the real cliffhangers being (only slightly) parodied in Tinsley's script.

THE CAPTIVE

By Robert Stallman

Pocket Books, paperback, \$2.50

This is the second in the late Robert Stallman's "Book of the Beast" trilogy. The first was last year's excellent THE ORPHAN, and in some ways THE CAPTIVE is even better. The narrator -- the "beast" -- is not simply a werewolf but a superhuman shapechanger who takes the form of -- or perhaps creates -- a series of humans, each of which is drawn

irresistibly to the members of one midwestern, depression-era family to which the beast's destiny is seemingly linked. In THE ORPHAN it took the shape of a small boy and then a teenager, both adopted by members of that family. In THE CAPTIVE it takes the form of a young man and marries one of the women in the family. Tension and suspense are stronger than in the first volume, particularly when, in both human and beast form, it tracks down the brutal kidnappers of its wife and small stepdaughter, with whom the beast has developed a very special rapport. There is much soul-searching and philosophizing as well, as the beast, always more intelligent and practical than its human forms, begins to mature and finds itself coming closer to an understanding of human thought and behavior and even doubts one of its fundamental rules of survival: "Alone is safe." The only trouble with these books is that it is impossible to explain in a few words how good and how unique they really are.

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DEADLY SILENTS

By Lee Killough

Ballantine/Del Rey, paperback, \$2.25

In her earlier THE DOPPELGÄNGER GAMBIT, Lee Killough created a detailed future society as the setting for an excellent police procedural mystery. In DEADLY SILENTS, also a straight mystery in many ways, she goes a step further and creates as her setting an alien telepathic civilization on a distant planet. Contact with Earth has robbed several of the aliens and their descendants of their telepathy, thus creating the "silents", a telepathically deaf and dumb "minority", some of whom, in reaction to the terrible frustration and isolation resulting from their handicap, have begun committing virtually the first violent crimes in the planet's history.

To cope with this, the aliens import Earth police to instruct them in setting up their own system. But someone is killing the police. Is it one of the silents? One of the humans themselves? A super-telepath who can mask his own thoughts? Though the mystery itself more than holds your interest, the portrait of the world and its civilization and the way humans, both good and bad, interact with it is equally well done and engrossing.



A TREASURY OF MODERN FANTASY

Edited by Terry Garr and Martin Harry Greenberg
Avon, paperback, \$8.95

The stories in this outstanding anthology range from H.P. Lovecraft's grisly "The Rats in the Walls", from a 1924 WEIRD TALES, to Harlan Ellison's nostalgia-filled "Jeffery is Five", a Hugo winner in 1978. In between, you'll find a bunch of Volcano Nymphs who have been unionized ("Thirteen O'Clock" by C.M. Kornbluth), a sentient whirlwind named Kitten who helps clean up some dirty politics ("Our Fair City" by Robert A. Heinlein), a Columbus who does sail off the edge of the world ("Sail On! Sail On!" by Philip Jose Farmer), a concert pianist who is also a werewolf ("There Shall be No Darkness" by James Blish, probably the most believable werewolf story ever written) and 27 more. There are over 600 pages here and you'd be hard put to find even one that's not, at the very least, entertaining.

A SPADEFUL OF SPACETIME

Edited by Fred Saberhagen
Ace, paperback, \$2.25

This isn't in quite the same class as the previous collection, but as an original "theme" anthology it is excellent. All the stories involve -- no time travel per se, but the juxtaposition of disparate elements from different eras. In Charles Sheffield's "Forefather Figure", for instance, a prehistoric man is brought to life in a roundabout, almost believable way. In Roger Zelazny's "Go Starless in the Night", a person who has had himself cryonically preserved is partially revived only to be questioned by unknown voices that may or may not be human. In "Strata" by Edward Bryant, "ghosts" of dinosaurs and other extinct creatures unknowingly interfere with near-future strip miners. If you're looking for action or adventure, you'll find little of it here, but what you will find is often better -- well-written, quiet treatments of fascinating ideas.

GIANTS' STAR

By James P. Hogan
Del Rey/Ballantine, \$2.50

GIANTS' STAR is the concluding and somewhat disappointing volume of Hogan's "Inherit the Stars" trilogy. In the first volume, we learned that our ancestors were taken to the planet Minerva twenty-five million years ago by scientifically advanced aliens who later abandoned them on Minerva and migrated to another star system. The abandoned humans eventually destroyed Minerva, which exploded and became the asteroid belt, our moon, and Pluto. The humans, of course, came to Earth 50,000 years ago. In the second volume, GENTLE GIANTS OF GANYMEDE, we met a shipload of the aliens themselves and found that the rest of the aliens probably still existed in that other solar system. In GIANTS' STAR, we find out how the war that destroyed Minerva started and why Earth humans have been so irrational and violent throughout most of their history.

All in all, it's exciting but slow. There are too many one-dimensional characters whose only function is to explain things, and there is too much "hard science" description of far future scientific wonders. It's almost as if Clarke-type concepts were being described by Hugo Gernsback, while Doc Smith was doing character development and battle scenes. Even so, I wouldn't miss it for the world, but it really hurts that it's not nearly as good as it should be, given the ideas Hogan is working with.

THE UNICORN AFFAIR

By James Fritzhand with
Frank Glucksman
Signet, paperback, \$2.50

The type of book that irritates me most is the type that grabs my interest with a slick, "best seller" style and keeps me reading -- or at least skimming -- despite the fact that early on I realize that the actual plot makes no more sense than a low-grade "sci-fi" movie.

THE UNICORN AFFAIR, which involves long-distance, computerized mind control of genius-level children, is a prime example of this type. The heroine, the widowed mother of one of these children, starts out sensibly enough, but about half way through, she starts acting like a character out of a bad gothic, including falling for some lunk who has spent the first half of the book being mysterious and churlish, but who, of course, turns out to have a silver lining under all that churl.

And what are the mind-control-

ling baddies going to do with these children? Simple. They are going to force them to compete in and win local science fair contests so they can demonstrate their projects (lasers, what else?) at the national science fair in Washington, where they can -- using their breadboarded lasers -- assassinate the President and/or a visiting dignitary when they make a courtesy visit to the fair.

I can just see it on the late-late-late show

STAR DRIFTER

By Dale Aycock
Leisure Books, Paperback, \$1.95

An interstellar pilot on the verge of bankruptcy and in search of a brother who supposedly was killed on a mission, to a "forbidden star system" gets involved with gold smuggling, a "headstrong" and rich young woman, countless villains with countless and complexly nefarious schemes, interstellar plots, etc. The book is pure adventure with no pretense to being anything else, least of all scientifically plausible or literarily ambitious. The science is right out of the old West and the characters slightly go deeper than Kimball Kinnison and Richard Seaton. However, if you ever get nostalgic for the Bat-Durston-and-his-Blazing-Six-Guns school of SF, you could do a lot worse than STAR DRIFTER. It's junk, but it's enjoyable junk.

PARATIME

By H. Beam Piper
Ace, Paperback, \$2.75

PARATIME is a collection of the late H. Beam Piper's Paratime Police series, including the memorable "He Walked Around the Horses", in which we find out what really happened to Benjamin Bathurst when he disappeared from that Prussian courtyard in 1809. That and a couple of the others were about as good as I remember them from ANALOG/ASTOUNDING of 20-30 years ago, but for the most part, Piper treats the various time-lines rather matter-of-factly, using them only as settings for straightforward action-adventure, unlike Keith Laumer's "Worlds of the Imperium" or the late Richard Meredith's "Timeliner" trilogy, in which "sense-of-wonder" discoveries are liberally mixed in with the action. Still, for any fans of Piper or of parallel-world fiction, it shouldn't be missed

TOMORROW'S HERITAGE

By Juanita Coulson
Ballantine/Del Rey, paperback, \$2.75

This first volume in the Children of the Stars "family saga" begins in 2040, when Earth is pulling itself together after a series of natural and man-made disasters, including war, famine and a New Madrid quake that created an inland sea where the central U.S. used to be. Governments have been virtually replaced by "ruling families" not unlike highly technological Fords and Rockefeller's. The inhabitants of a lunar colony and a space station, out of favor with the "fix-things-on-Earth-first" groups in power, are threatening to rebel. And an alien ship is heading toward Earth from interstellar space.

The story itself, using many family saga conventions, follows the discoverer of the alien vessel, Todd Saunder, who is the only level-headed member of the super-rich Saunder clan. Brother Patrick, a shooin to be the next planetary chairman, and Patriarch Jael Saunder are seemingly conservative xenophobes, while sister Mariette is one of the leaders of the rebelling space colonies.

The first forty pages, unfortunately, are mostly slow-paced scene-setting and read a bit like a future travelogue, but from then on it turns into a real rowser and the last couple of hundred pages, while Todd tries to prepare Earth for the aliens' arrival and keep the rest of the family from literally starting a war between Earth and the space colonies, are the sort that keep you reading till two or three in the morning.

VOYAGERS

By Ben Bova
Doubleday, \$14.95

Basically, VOYAGERS is 50 pages about an alien spaceship approaching Earth from interstellar space, but unlike "Tomorrow's Children", that is the only SF concept involved. The remaining 350 pages race through the resulting personal and political maneuvering and dirty tricks, both here and in Russia.

Unfortunately, there isn't a single character you can really admire or root for, and few you can believe in. You can, however, certainly root for some of their goals, particularly those of a U.S. astronaut and a Russian linguist who are fighting the paranoid and deadly bureaucracies of both sides in order to push through a joint U.S.-Russian mission to rendezvous with the alien

VOYAGERS is fast and exciting and keeps you turning pages all the way, and the alien ship itself, though a far cry from Arthur C. Clarke's in RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA, is in a way not only more believable but more mysterious and awe-inspiring. In short, like an Irving Wallace best-seller I read a few years ago, it's a book you may be annoyed at yourself for enjoying, but you'll probably enjoy it tremendously anyway.

THE CALIFORNIA COVEN PROJECT

By Bob Stickgold
Ballantine/DelRey, Paper, \$2.50.

THE CALIFORNIA COVEN PROJECT: In an energy-poor near future, dramatic increases in hospital staph infections among mothers and newborn babies has resulted in widespread use of home delivery by medically trained midwives. One midwife discovers a 100% effective cure for cancer in women, but because the "medication" is 300 years old and smacks of witchcraft, they don't dare announce it publicly until they have enough documented cures to prove its effectiveness. And when word of their failures among male patients leaks out, they have to go underground to avoid arrest while they continue treating patients and trying to find out how to make the treatment work on men. While the characters are largely one-dimensional and the conflict between the enterprising good guys and the hide-bound, stultifying medical and political establishments is oversimplified and one-sided, the story is fast-moving and exciting and, like a couple other recent DelRey titles, has you rooting and cheering and biting your nails all the way.

THE SHROUDED PLANET

By Robert Silverberg & Randall Garrett
Starblaze Editions, Donning Company, 5041 Admiral Wright Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23462. Paper, \$4.95.

THE SHROUDED PLANET: Made up of three novelettes from the Campbell days of ANALOG/ASTOUNDING, "The Shrouded Planet" tells how star-traveling Earthmen covertly introduce science and social progress to the perpetually cloud-covered medieval planet of Nidor. To do this, they present themselves, amid suitable "miracles", as representatives of "The Great Light" and establish the Bel-rogas School of Divine Law, at which with the help of a Nidorian staff, they work within the tenets

of the Nidorian religion to accomplish their purpose. The entire book, however, is told from the viewpoint of the Nidorians, and an interesting Afterword by Silverberg explains how the stories and the viewpoint came about. Light and smooth and, at least for me, full of nostalgia; THE SHROUDED PLANET is, like most of the Starblaze series, a well-made, attractive package.

SATAN'S MISTRESS. SATAN'S SEDUCTRESS

By Brian McNaughton
Carlyle, \$2.25 & \$2.50.

SATAN'S MISTRESS. SATAN'S SEDUCTRESS: A more apt title might have been CITHULHU'S CONCUBINES, since all the supernatural goings-on are purely Lovecraftian, including, as in Bloch's recent STRANGE EONS, numerous references to H.P. Lovecraft himself and his work. To oversimplify, SATAN'S MISTRESS follows the efforts of the long-dead Mordred Glendower, acting through a twentieth-century teenage descendant, to resurrect his incestuous and equally long-dead daughter, Mirdath. Among Mordred's problems are a neighborhood Satanist and the fact that Mirdath's grave is now the site of the town dump. Apparently, as a result of contamination by "every manner of creeping, crawling thing" in the dump, the eventual resurrection is not quite what either Mordred or Mirdath expected. In SATAN'S SEDUCTRESS then, Mirdath herself, still active despite having headed back for the grave when she saw the condition she was in, is looking for a new body to inhabit from amongst the people living in the apartment house that was built on the dump site between books.

Both SATAN'S MISTRESS and SATAN'S SEDUCTRESS are the kind of schizophrenic books that drive me nuts. On the positive side, they are filled with perfectly lovely bits, both spine-tingling and witty. For instance, the porno-writer hero's encounter with a resurrected body in SATAN'S SEDUCTRESS is one of the quietest yet most effectively frightening scenes I can remember outside of Shirley Jackson or E.F. Benson. There are also bits like the somewhat slobbish apprentice wizard's moaning about being able to cast spells to make his wife love him but not to make her do the laundry. And the Necronomicon is discovered holding up one corner of a broken-legged desk, disguised as the Yellow Pages. There's even a ten-page house-wifely colloquy vaguely reminiscent of Jean Kerr, all leading up to the offhand

announcement that a drowned baby has just been found in the pond out back.

On the other hand there are several passages that struck me as crude and jarringly out of place, as if they'd wandered in from another book about a totally different set of characters. Still, at least for me, the fun and fright far outweighed the occasional lapses, and if you want to find out if they do for you too, I understand the books can be had (for cover price +30¢) from Carlyle Communications, POB 242, Mount Morris, IL 61054. Unfortunately, you probably won't find them at your neighborhood newsstand.



TINTAGEL

By Paul H. Cook
Berkley, Paperback, \$2.25.

In the collapsing civilization of the 21st century, a mutated man-made virus is causing people to literally disappear, apparently allowing them to escape into alternate realities created by their own, infected minds. Immunes, known as Stalkers, are able to follow the victims into those other realities and bring them back. The alternate realities themselves, each keyed to a specific musical composition, are fascinating, and the gradual revelations about the "real" world -- Southern California taken over by Mexican terrorists, for instance, and an almost continuous series of earthquakes resulting from ill-fated attempts to forestall the inevitable San Andreas quake -- are equally intriguing. The story itself follows a Stalker through more than a dozen increasingly complex and puzzling alternate realities. Though there are no memorable characters here, TINTAGEL is an odd combination of mysticism, adventure and anti-establishment doomsday propaganda that, surprisingly, works very well.

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BLOOD COUNTY

By Curt Selby
DAW Books, Paperback, \$2.25.

Duquieu Lampron, an ageless creature somewhat akin to a vampire, has ruled an isolated West Virginia mountain community for more than a hundred years. The inhabitants are convinced that, without Lampron's "blessing", their crops would fail and countless other calamities would befall them. In return for this "care", Lampron receives their worship and their blood, the latter collected and delivered daily by a villager known euphemistically as "the milkman". But now Lampron is being challenged by another of his kind, his own recently-killed son, and the result is an epidemic of grisly killings and equally grisly risen corpses. Despite some careless plotting, BLOOD COUNTY is reminiscent of a backwoods SALEM'S LOT and fans of that Stephen King thriller will probably enjoy this less chilling but more original -- and much shorter -- effort.

THE WOLVES OF MEMORY

By George Alec Effinger
Putnam, \$14.95

Sander Curane, because he failed in his TECT-assigned careers as professional basketball player (he's

short, thin and clumsy) and science fiction writer (he's a terrible writer), is exiled via matter transmitter to a pastoral prison planet where everyone, because of a disease native to the planet, dies slowly and horribly within months. TECT, the world-controlling computer, is a cross between HAL and a fussy, intellectual Don Rickles and nothing is quite what it seems. Despite continually hopping back and forth among a half dozen or more separate, overlapping time sequences, the story is easy to follow and almost impossible to quit on. Anyone who enjoys the following quote from A.J. Langguth's "Jesus Christs", used by Effinger at the beginning of the book, will certainly enjoy the similar wit in THE WOLVES OF MEMORY:

"'I have come to die for your sins,' Jesus told a stooped figure passing him on the road.
'Then what am I to die for?'" the old man asked.
'Jesus took a small notebook from his pocket and copied the question. "If I may have your name and address", he said, "an answer will be sent you."'



THE AFFIRMATION

By Christopher Priest
Scribners, \$10.95

Despite a "serious and arty" jacket description, THE AFFIRMATION is first-rate entertainment, provided you aren't addicted to fast-moving action and don't object to a fair amount of ambiguity. The story may be a first-person account of the narrator's growing madness, or it may be a science fiction novel about an alternate universe in which chances for immortality are raffled off in a worldwide lottery. Personally, I thought it was the story of two separate people, one on present-day earth, the other in a vastly different parallel world, both going mad and, perhaps because each person's set of delusions happen to match the other person's real world, exchanging realities in the end. In any case, it's a fascinating psychological study written in a slow,

deliberate, turn-of-the-century style similar to that which, for instance, Michael Moorcock used so well in his Oswald Bastable "Warlord of the Air" series.

SPACE DOCTOR

By Lee Correy
Ballantine/Del Rey, \$2.50, Paperback.

This time, Correy's hero tackles the problem of designing, building and using the first hospital in space, needed to service the people who will be building and operating a giant solar power collecting satellite. As in Correy's earlier STAR DRIVER and SHUTTLE DOWN, the scientific and technological details are fascinating, and the medical problems are equally interesting. However, instead of being stereotyped and perfect, the hero this time is stereotyped and plagued with emotional problems resulting from his wife's death. Also, the bureaucratic bad guys that kept the reader's hostility stirred up in the other two books put in only token appearances here and are defeated offstage. As a result, there is less tension in SPACE DOCTOR and it comes dangerously close to being a guided tour of the space hospital in various stages of construction. Still, it is a good tour.

BLAKELY'S ARK

By Ian MacMillan
Berkley, \$2.25, Paperback

Don't be put off by the fact that whoever wrote the jacket blurbs for this post-plague novel gets the hero's name and age both wrong. The book itself is one of the better after-the-disaster stories, following a maybe-immune, maybe-just-very-careful young man as he tries to make his way from upstate New York to the Complex, the only place in the country safe from both the still-active plague virus and the survivors who have reverted to barbarism. There are a number of good twists to the plot, and the picture of "human nature" among both the outside survivors and the "civilized" ones inside the Complex seems more realistic, if more depressing, than in most similar books. In a way, it's reminiscent of Leigh Brackett's classic THE LONG TOMORROW, except that the technological haven MacMillan's hero reaches is more believable and less of a haven than Brackett's.

AND I HAVE SEEN THE HARBOR

And I have seen the harbor
And the ship's departing gleam,
And the witnesses of wonders
Are forgiven when they dream.

-- Anne Passovoy --

Thursday, April 9 -- Florida's State Highway 50 runs straight east from Orlando to Titusville, a few miles from Merritt Island and the Kennedy Space Center. I curse my way down the road in the little brown Monza I rented in Orlando; it's been a long time since I drove a car with power steering, and I'm having a hard time readjusting. Traffic isn't very heavy once I get outside the city limits, about the only reason the car is still in one piece. The few other drivers on the road shake their heads and pass me as quickly as they can. No, fellows, I'm not drunk. Just overcontrolling a bit, thank you very much.

My letter of accreditation from Dick Geis and a letter from NASA confirming my status as the official press correspondent for SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, lie on the seat beside me. I haven't been too excited about the whole thing up to this point, but with my date with Columbia less than an hour away, I start to giggle and bounce on the seat. It's really happening, after all these years. And I'm going to be a part of it. I may not be reporting for TIME or NEWSWEEK, but my press pass is every bit as good as Dan Rather's. The Hallelujah Chorus seems about right.

As usual, I'm off to a late start. I had intended to be at the press site by ten o'clock, but I'll be lucky to make it before noon. The sun is brilliant through the windshield, warming my hands on the steering wheel, but the air conditioner is working well. The one essential piece of equipment on any Florida car, as I am coming to appreciate. The highway bears into the sun as straight as a ruler. A hawk or heron (so alright, I'm not an ornithologist; whatever it is, it's got big wings) soars lazily



over the road. The vegetation is lush to either side, something of a cross between a forest and a jungle. The car radio says the lizards are out on the road sunning themselves. I don't see any, but I can well believe it. A beautiful spring day, with a nice breeze to take the edge off the heat.

A few miles from Titusville I turn onto Highway A1A, which takes me to Gate 3 of the KSC. Press Credentials are confirmed and badges issued at Gate 2, so the guard gives me a regular visitor's pass for my car and waves me on through with directions to the proper gate, several miles down the road and to the right. The road turns into a causeway across the Indian River, with a drawbridge in the middle. Off to the left the Vertical Assembly Building is visible as a tiny white sugar cube. Signs along the road advise motorists to tune their radios to a channel for tourist information; a rather clever idea, I think. The vegetation on the island looks more tropical, and gulls fly low over the clear blue water. KSC shares Merritt Island with the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge, a park which protects a number of endangered species -- including

the nests of several bald eagles. All sorts of rare birds fly around here.

I drive past the Tourist Information Center, but when I come to the crossroad I think I'm supposed to take, I'm unsure enough to go back and ask. I was right the first time, and going back was a mistake. I can't resist the temptation to look around, and what was supposed to be a five-minute scouting expedition turns into a wasted half hour wandering through the souvenir shop. I wanted to pick up a fresh battery for my camera, but the lines are enormous. After spending fifteen minutes getting to the head of one line only to be told batteries are handled in another line I give up. With a map in hand from the Information Desk I get back in the car and head back to the crossroad. Gate 2 is several miles to the right. I'm going out instead of coming in, but at least I'm at the right place.

The line at the small building just outside the gate where they're processing press credentials isn't exactly short, either. I just get into the line when a van drives up to discharge the first three familiar faces I've seen in two days. Joe and Gay Haldeman and Rusty Hevlin, smile as they walk over to join the crowd. Joe is writing a book about the Shuttle for Viking Press and Rusty is doing a feature story for his local newspaper in Iowa. We trade information and small talk while waiting, in between taking turns with Joe's pen to fill out the form passed out to each person in the line by a secretary who makes periodic forays out of the building.

At the head of the line, Rusty runs into a problem. He hasn't received his confirmation letter from NASA, and the secretary says she can't find him on the approved list in the computer. Without either of these he's going to be turned away. The secretary has a "next case" look on her face, but Rusty isn't going



to give up that easily. He asks another secretary if the computer file is by reporter's name or name of the organization he represents.

"Both", the secretary answers.

"Then would you look under the name of my paper, please?"

The clerk types a message and studies the CRT. "You're there," he says at last. Rusty looks like a man granted a stay of execution by the governor. Meanwhile the first secretary is trying to get the rest of us to carpool out to the press site. We politely decline, not wishing to be dependent on anyone else for our mobility. The secretary is exasperated.

"We have four thousand reporters and only one thousand parking spaces," she says tartly. "It's going to be every man for himself out there".

Joe will be doing his share to relieve the parking crunch. This van will be hauling eight people once the rest of the Iowa fan contingent shows up. Me, I've never been accused of being an altruist, and I figure the Monza won't take up that much room.

I ask Joe if he has a spare battery for his camera he'd be willing to sell me. He doesn't and the nearest place to buy batteries (with the exception of the Tourist Information Center) is back in Titusville. Joe's parents live in Titusville, though, and he's headed back that direction for a while. He generously offers to buy a battery for me when he buys his own. My camera is borrowed and I'm not sure what size battery it

takes, so I take the battery out and give it to him to use for comparison. This leaves me with a camera unable to take pictures, but how long can he be gone? I head back for my car and drive through the gate -- headed the right direction this time -- straight ahead on the Kennedy Parkway for the sugar-cube-shape of the VAB.

2 P.M. -- My reactions to the spectacular often surprise me for their mildness. I'm never quite as awed by the awesome as I expect to be. Everybody talks about the overwhelming size of the VAB, about how you just have to let yourself stand open-mouthed for awhile the first time you come into its presence. Driving close to it on my way to the press site, I try to feel some of that, but what my inner voice is really saying is, "It should be bigger." Don't get me wrong: anything big enough to hold three-and-a-half Empire State Buildings inside can't fail to produce some reaction. But even with people and cars at the base of the monolith, it's hard to get a proper sense of scale. It's only when you understand that the flag painted on the side of the building, looking like a decal on a model airplane, measures 209 by 115 feet, that you begin to gain some appreciation of what the dimensions of this thing really are. A full-scale Saturn V lies on its side in front of the building, and I have the same problem with it. Isn't there a stage missing or something? Surely, that can't be all of it!

The parking area for the press site isn't full yet. I manage to get a parking space fairly close to the building complex, and hurry up toward the press stands. The site has changed drastically from the earlier days, they tell me. There used to be no permanent buildings there. Now each of the television networks has a small studio building. NASA has built a roofed set of stadium-like bleachers with desks and connections for portable phones for everybody else, with an air-conditioned briefing hall directly behind it. The rest of the complex is a maze of portable trailers representing every organization you can think of and some you can't, from Associated Press to Nikon. The camera manufacturers are there to loan out thousands of dollars worth of lenses and equipment to press photographers. Too bad my camera is a Minolta.

The big pre-launch press conference is underway as I arrive, with a big table set up in front of the bleachers for the NASA officials who drew the short straws. The only

face I recognize is that of Deke Slayton. Deeply tanned and lined, with long gray sideburns, someone should cast him for "The Lion in Winter". John Yardley, administrator of the Shuttle program, is also there, but his face isn't too well known outside of NASA. The other seats are filled by the flight surgeon and a couple of other technical types. The level of the questions being pitched to them isn't too impressive. Jules Bergman must be a lonely man.

For the past couple of hours I have been trying to ignore a mild burning on the back of my hands, but there is no denying the fact that I have a sunburn and the pain is slowly mounting. Naturally, the one thing I forgot to pack in my medicine kit is sunburn lotion, and there is nowhere I can get any for at least fifteen miles. In the shade of the bleachers the pain is barely tolerable. Venturing out into the afternoon sun for more than a few minutes is an exercise in torture. The burning can be reduced temporarily by running cold water on it in the washroom, but this will remove all the natural oils from the skin and dry it out; what I am really doing is buying a little relief now at the price of vastly increased suffering later. Even knowing this (and I don't, not yet), the information will come in a conversation with Gay Haldeman later in the evening), the drive to do something will prove irresistible as the day wears on.

For the moment there is enough to do to keep my mind off the burn. I look around the various offices at the press site once the press conference is over. In the building behind the bleachers, in addition to the briefing room, there is a liaison office for those members of the press whose principal interest is photography. I inquire there about tours out to the pad for some closeup shots. Sad to say, there's only going to be one more such tour, and it's been booked solid for weeks. Will there be more tours if the launch is postponed? Wait and see. But there will be tours to the pad after the liftoff.

Terrific.

Ten years ago I came down here for the Apollo 15 launch, and the same thing happened then. I seem to be forever destined to arrive just in time to get a closeup of an empty pad. But the chances for postponement still seem fair, and with any luck I may still get a chance.

The next building is a distribution center for press kits and NASA bulletins, as well as the press releases of anyone else who wants to play up their part in making the

launch possible. A forest has been sacrificed to stock the bins in this room, filled with disguised advertisements from everyone from North American Rockwell to Thiokol (prime contractor for the Solid Rocket Boosters) to Fisher Space Pens to the Department of Defense. It would take weeks to digest it all. I don't even try; I just take one of everything and stash it all in my car for later perusal. On my way out to the car I see why a large cleared space next to the parking lot is not being used for cars: a helicopter is settling to the ground in a cloud of dust and sand.

Odd the experiences we have when we least expect them. I've traveled fifteen hundred miles to see a rocket take off, but this is the closest I've ever been to a helicopter.

4:30 P.M. -- I take time out at the car to eat my gourmet lunch bought back in Orlando. Bananas and bologna sandwiches may not be the best way to fill a stomach, but they are among the cheapest and most portable. The sun is past its worst, but my hands are still uncomfortable. My arms are burned too, but hardly bother me at all. I finish as quickly as I can and head back for the cool of the buildings. Joe and Gay haven't showed up yet, and I am beginning to be a little concerned. With so many people milling about, how will I ever find them? I have visions of having to watch the launch tomorrow without a working camera. Dozens of cameras are set up on tripods on the water's edge, so I head down there to ask their owners about the chances of buying a battery.

The biggest camera in the group is a motion picture camera run by an amiable fellow from Walt Disney. In addition to his rig, Disney has five automatic cameras set up with overlapping fields of coverage to produce a panorama, set up very close to the pad. Someone asks him why Disney doesn't use the film taken by NASA cameras at about the same position. He explains how his cameras are better than the equipment NASA has, with a greater number of frames per second and so forth.

"Besides," he adds, "we don't want the same thing everybody else has."

No luck on the battery problem. Now I learn that the Blue Angels are going to be putting on an aerobatic demonstration over the VAB in less than an hour. Joe, Joe, where are you?

5:30 P.M. -- The demonstration is gorgeous, as always. Camera or no

camera. It's a joy to watch such fine flying. It's been a turn-on for me ever since I was a kid. I'll never be that good, but someday I'll be a pilot. I will.

As I walk back up the beach, I'm surprised at how firm the ground is underfoot. It doesn't seem sandy, and there is plenty of scrub grass to hold it in place. Over to the left is a big orange Barnum-and-Bailley-style tent for more work space. I don't envy the reporters who have to work in there, without the air conditioning of the buildings or the breeze of the bleachers.

There are a number of huge TV screens set up in front of the bleachers, and one in the Information Center. The ones outside are tied in to the NASA video network, which shows an unchanging picture of the Shuttle on Pad 39A. The one in the Information Center, though, carries the regular commercial networks, and a bunch of us crowd inside to watch Dan Rather do the evening news from the studio next door. Rather is playing up the risks involved in the mission, emphasizing the untested nature of the technology. The trouble with the main engines and the tiles gets another going over, as does the behind-schedule-over-budget chorus that CBS never sings for public welfare programs. The fact that there have been no unmanned tests of the Shuttle gets prominent attention. An interview with Young is played, in which he says he doesn't think unmanned tests are necessary. He is, first and foremost, a test pilot, and for him this is the way things should be. Aside from the fact that he believes it, what else could he possibly say?

Looking around the room, I see the NASA Public Affairs people giggle in embarrassment. Do they have their own doubts? I don't blame Rather for the hype he's doing. The public demands a spectacle, and the natural drama of the event isn't enough for them. He's just giving them what they want. "What it comes down to is faith", he concludes. Clearly, NASA has the faith, but I wouldn't trade places with Young or Grippen. It's not the lack of unmanned tests that bother me, or the teething troubles on certain aspects of a new technology. Those are to be expected. No, the doubt that gnaws in my mind is over a more intangible issue. I wonder whether the budget cutbacks of the last ten years have managed to kill the dream for the people who remained with NASA through the layoffs. Has NASA lost the "can do" spirit that characterized its younger days and become just another government bureaucracy? From the amount of paperwork generated over

each tile, I fear that may be the case. Perhaps the dream has become ... not lost, but misplaced.

7:00 P.M. -- The sun has gone, but a little light remains. As I step outside I see a chopper hovering high up to the south. Closer to the ground a couple of gulls are buzzing the trailers. They seem envious of the attention being given to machines which only imitate what they do naturally. I muse to myself that neither form of winged beauty is superior to the other, only different.

Despite the cool air, the burn is more insistent with each passing hour, and I am restless. I go for another walk through the complex. The only place to buy anything to eat is a trailer filled with vending machines. I buy a Dr. Pepper from one of the machines. The can is nearly room temperature. Oh, well. The machine also dispenses a local lemon drink which another reporter refers to as carbonated Bactine.

There are miles of cable strung between the trailers, cables strung for the sake of stringing them. I wonder if some of these guys would know how to act if they didn't have their cables underfoot. In some places they form an almost solid carpet. I emerge from the maze just as the last light is fading, just in time to see a dozen gulls launch a major assault on the open space in front of the press site. There are plenty of crumbs for them to eat, but there are too many people for them to feel safe. They circle low, screaming, touching the ground just long enough to snatch a morsel and beating aloft again. They look like pilots practicing touch-and-go landings.

The TV in the Information Center is tuned to Buck Rogers now, God help us. It seems absurd to watch television tonight, but nothing is happening that we can see. The only thing to be gained by going outside, we are a number of large welts from the mosquitos that have come out for a



feast; nearby Mosquito Lagoon is aptly named.

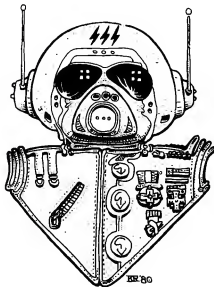
Among those watching is a fellow with a huge black beard, who turns out to be a representative of one of the newer space lobbyist groups. He tells me his group is opposed to the use of space for military purposes, and feels that the L-5 Society has sold out to the military in the hope they can ride the coattails of Air Force spending into space. That may be a noble sentiment, but I fail to see its practicality. By default it confines all future wars to earth, where the potential for mass destruction, indeed for the eradication of civilization, is much greater (I'm not enough of an egotist for my species to believe we could sterilize the globe, even if we manage to deal ourselves out of existence. The biosphere is a lot tougher than we think).

Space holds far greater potential for defensive military applications than for offensive ones anyway, at least for the foreseeable future. With the odds favoring the defense, we might even see a greater large-scale stability -- brush wars and terrorism aren't going to go away -- develop among the superpowers. Nations don't go to war unless they think they can win. To use the simplest example of how space military applications make this more difficult, no aggressor in the world today can hope to launch a Pearl Harbor-type surprise attack, with all those eyes and ears in the sky watching every tank that moves and listening to every radio message that jiggles the ether. More powerful defensive devices are on the way; I'll lay bets with anyone that by the turn of the century somebody is going to have space-based lasers to knock down ballistic missiles (and God help us all if the Russians beat us off the drawing boards with that one). The offensive weapons I've heard people talk about for deployment in space -- big mirrors to fry cities like a cockroach under a lens, for example -- are no more destructive than atomic weapons, and do far less damage to the biosphere; they don't leave any radiation around. And they are vulnerable to counter-weapons.

I don't say all this in my conversation, nor do I tell the gentleman that I think he has far too naive a view of the species he's been born into. But I do tell him that as long as the Soviet Union has a satellite-killer system -- which they have had since the early '70s, and the lack of recent tests doesn't mean they've given up on them; it merely means they have a proven system -- then I for one devoutly hope the USAF has one as well. He grudgingly

agrees on this point. As we drift apart I realize neither of us has managed to convince the other, but at least we managed to carry on the discussion without raising our voices.

The conversation marks my second encounter with space lobbyists since I arrived at the press site. Shortly after the press conference this afternoon I ran into some boys from the Halley Fund, who were having a press conference at one of the local hotels to publicize their launching of a drive to collect funds for a probe to Halley's Comet in 1986. Funds for the probe were recently cut from the NASA development budget, and they want to get it back. They know they can't possibly collect enough



money to finance it, but they hope to get it into the budget by demonstrating widespread public support for the mission. Shades of the Viking Fund. I wish them luck.*

The space lobbyist groups are multiplying like rabbits these days, and they're spread all across the political spectrum. It's a hopeful sign for the future of our national involvement in space, one conservative types such as myself can feel smug about. Joe Haldeman has told me before that he can't understand the conservative intellect, but he thinks a lot of conservative sentiment in favor of space, comes from interest in its military uses and potential for big industrial development. This is only a half-truth

*Those interested can write to: The Halley Fund, 357 Saratoga Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA, 95050.

and one which I think demonstrates his own prejudices clearly. The most important factor in conservative support for the space program is its appeal to our libertarian instincts. The marrow of the conservative bone is the conviction that no one should have the power to dictate another's lifestyle, and the conservative grasps more clearly than the liberal the true meaning of the space adventure. Space is the potential liberator of all mankind. The diversity of the space lobbyists makes the point more clearly than any words. They'll all make it, someday, and each one of them will build the kind of future he wants for his own children. So what if not all those futures appear to me or to you? We'll find our own people to make the journey with.

10:00 P.M. -- Back in front of the television. A good portion of NBC's 20/20 is devoted to the shuttle. They do a long feature on the Apollo 13 near-catastrophe, which happened eleven years ago this month. More not-so-subtle hype to build the suspense. For all of that, the program is remarkably well done.

10:30 P.M. -- The Haldemans finally arrive. A classic case of failed communications. They had intended to spend the day with Joe's parents, and I thought they were coming along as soon as they made a quick run back to town. Joe couldn't find anyone with the right size of battery for me, so he gives me my original back. At least I have something in my camera now; I just hope it has enough juice left to carry me through.

C.J. Cherryh is with the Haldemans, a most pleasant surprise. I saw her at a convention only a week ago, but didn't realize she was coming. We exchange greetings, then most of the party wanders off. Joe and Carolyn seem to be the only SF authors who have flown in. A lot of the regular SF crowd didn't make it for one reason or another. Jerry Pourmelle and Larry Niven aren't here, nor is Gordy Dickson (his asthma is acting up again, unfortunately), nor Paul Anderson. Another one of the fans-cum-writers remarks to Joe that the showing of the SF community for this flight is both surprising and disappointing.

The sunburn is driving me insane by now, filling my consciousness with a thousand fiery needles plunged into the backs of my hands. Nothing I can do will keep my mind off it. I am making trips to the washroom every ten minutes now, and the minute the skin dries the fire

is back to roast my flesh. The pain forms a molten center for my universe, around which every other sensory input flits like a mote in the void. I ask Gay if she has any sunburn lotion. She doesn't nor do any of the NASA secretaries I ask.

Try to look at the bright side, McMurray. You ran into John Chancellor on one of those trips to the washroom, didn't you?

April 10 -- I have never experienced such pain. Six and a half hours to go? I'll never make it! The brain should have circuit breakers. Now I have something to replace the two weeks I spent working in a McDonalds for my personal image of hell. This one is straight out of the old-fashioned Baptist revivalist hellfire sermons. I go outside where the cool air can soothe my skin and by damn if these aren't the biggest mosquitos I've ever seen! Four of them could gang up and carry away a small child.

Back inside ...

1:30 A.M. -- I am poured out like water. My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potherb, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked enclosed me; they pierced my hands ...

3:00 A.M. -- I pace. I feel my jaws beginning to ache from clenching my teeth. Since my conversation with Gay I have been trying to limit my trips to the washroom so as not to dry my skin out too much, but it's a test of willpower to hold them down to once every 20 minutes. I discovered that the mosquitos can be kept away by walking fast, so every now and then I go outside for a walk. The pad is a fairy tower across the water, with the shuttle bathed in the light of dozens of floodlights. A lot of the press photographers have staked out their territories at the water's edge and are sleeping by their tripods. The area isn't very crowded yet. I wonder how they can stand all the bugs. They must have some powerful repellent. I open my camera lens as far as it will go and try for a long exposure shot. Don't ever let anyone tell you that fairly long exposures aren't possible with a hand-held camera. I've taken excellent pictures with a full second exposure; all it takes is a steady hand and no breathing.

How I wish for a telephoto lens. Some of the photographers let me look through theirs and they can practic-

ally see faces in the cockpit. I take a last look around before heading back for the bleachers, and Anne Passovoy's song runs through my mind. Light dancing on the water and a full moon overhead. I have seen the harbor.

Heading back for the Information Center I pass a knot of people in front of the bleachers looking at one of the big NASA TVs. I stop short as I hear a familiar voice. I turn and peer closely at the man in the center of the group. Can it be? Yes, he's shaved off his moustache, but it is Martin Caidin. Caidin is one of the people I've wanted to meet for years, and I circle back hoping to edge my way into the conversation. Even the sunburn seems suddenly trivial.



Pause for station break. I realize many of you will not be familiar with the name, but you should be. Martin Caidin has published a couple of scores of books, including the novel on which the movie MAROONED was based, and a pretty fair novel which made it to television as the late unlamented SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN. His novels have been dismissed by some as "not SF" because they're not fantastic enough; Caidin writes about the very near future, with off-the-shelf hardware for his props. He also writes in the tradition of the aviation novel; to him the rocket is an airplane that flies higher. Don't let the fact that his writing doesn't fit into our ghetto mould put you off, though. Read them for the most accurate portrait available in fiction for what the inside of the space program is really like. His writing is a marvel.

Barely restraining myself from inserting a bibliography, I continue: Caidin is talking to some of his old cronies. "Remember when I told you twenty years ago we'd be doing this someday?" He reminisces about the

early days, before Sputnik, when he and von Braun and a handful of others (yes, he goes that far back. Farther: he was a member of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey that examined Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Some of his books on aviation history are standard texts at the Air Force Academy.) were trying to convince the Defense Department to let them launch a satellite on an Army missile. "We could have launched that bastard in February of '56," he shakes his head. He goes on for some time, and every time someone interjects a comment he comes back with more information on the subject of the comment. It's obvious he's forgotten more than the rest of the crowd combined will ever learn. I boggle at one piece of information he lets drop: among the college courses he teaches is a course on theology. He's an ordained minister! I would have taken him for a believer, but the image of this man in a pulpit just doesn't compute for me. Caidin is a man of broad personality, and one of the more obvious aspects of this is his profanity. He can complete a sentence without swearing, but he does not trouble himself to do so very often -- particularly when he's enthused, which is usually. Example: "I gave up skydiving. I figure the only thing that falls out of the sky is birdshit and idiots". (He goes on to explain that he's only joking. He wants to set the world's record for the largest number of people in a team jump.)

He does have the best comment I've heard on the mosquitos. "There is only one way to describe these bastards. They could fuck a turkey flatfooted."

The television shows that the astronauts are awake and at breakfast. As the NASA announcer's voice booms from the overhead speakers with a list of the menu, I see my opportunity to get into the conversation.

"Where's the steak?" I ask.

Caidin shakes his head and smiles. "They don't serve steak anymore. Know why? They found out it takes sixteen hours for the body to metabolize it. It's wasted. They don't serve steak to fighter pilots anymore, either. Pasta is good for quick energy. Serve 'em any pasta; not so much the sugar level, but the energy level is tremendous." NASA may have eliminated the steak, but they aren't that unconventional. Pasta isn't on the morning menu.

Still looking at the screen, Caidin continues, "Bob Crippen is really coming into his own at last. And that's great, because he's a real live wire."

The group begins to break up. I take a deep breath and introduce



myself. "The first thing I did when I found out they were going to let me come was pack a suitcase of your books in the hopes I would meet you and you'd autograph them for me."

He smiles. "Where are they?"

"In my car."

"Go get 'em. I'd be glad to."

We talk as he signs the book.

"They gave you a bit part in MARCOON-ED, didn't they?"

"Yes, and I had a couple of small parts in THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN."

"Did you? I didn't see you. That must have been after I gave up on it."

He chuckles. "It was after I gave up on it. We have a new series coming on this fall. It's called MANFAC, short for Man Facsimile." As he signs THE MENDELSON CONSPIRACY: "They want to make this into a movie. Some outfit in England, of all places. Francis Ford Coppola has bought the rights to film THE AQUARIUS MISSION. If he does that, it'll be an under-water STAR WARS."

As we take our leave of each other, I walk back to the car in a glow of satisfaction. The whole trip would have been worth it for that meeting. They have opened up the Briefing Room, closed for most of the night, and after I put the books away I head back there. There are twin screens on the wall, now showing the astronauts being helped into their couches on Columbia's flight deck. The room is dark, and several people have sacked out on the floor. Exhaustion is beginning to win the battle with adrenalin, and I find that in the cool room I can nap for about twenty minutes at a time before the sunburn wakes me up again. The rest of the night passes more swiftly.

6:00 A.M. -- I wake up with a start to the realization that the flight crew is already into their planned hold at T minus 20 minutes. I rush outside. The sun is already up!

There goes my chance to take pictures of the pad at sunrise. I shudder to think that if I had only slept a little longer, I might have missed the whole thing.

I am standing at the side of the bleachers, within spitting distance of Governor Jerry Brown. I successfully resist the temptation. That parasite is only here because here is where the cameras are. He gave up his politics of thinking small when he discovered that lower expectations wasn't what the young people wanted to hear. Now he's preaching the gospel of the new frontier -- and his commitment to space exploration is no deeper than the sunburned skin which will be peeling off the backs of my hands in a few days. He even looks plastic, like a Ken doll without Barbie on his arm. I curl my lip and move away from the reporters ringing him with microphones, meditating on some of the nastier Doonesbury cartoons with Jerry as their subject.

Moving down to the bank, I notice that the soil underfoot is much softer now, loosened up with the passage of thousands of feet back and forth across it. The edge of the river is more crowded now. I unlumber my camera and try to find a spot where I won't be shooting the back of someone's head. Eventually I find a pretty good spot, near some guys with a small portable TV. Carolyn Cherryh is standing nearby, and we chat while waiting for the main event. I had hoped the launch might be postponed at least once, so I could get out to the pad for pictures, but with only a half hour to go it looks as if this is not to be.

But wait. The hold is being extended. Something is wrong with the backup computer. We listen to the radio as the sun climbs higher and warms the bank. Finally it's too warm for me to remain outside any longer, and I duck back into the Briefing Room to wait for the last few minutes of the count. I plan on a mad dash down to the beach at about five minutes before liftoff, if they manage to get that far in the count. In the cool darkness I tell myself sternly that I won't take a chance on going back to sleep, but my body betrays my willpower. It doesn't matter. In a couple of hours the flight director announces that the launch will be scrubbed for today. The next attempt will be on Sunday, since the liquid fuel must be drained to minimize boiling off and the big external tank must be reconditioned to accept supercold liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen all over again.

The delay has a value for historical sentiment as well as for my personal selfishness. If the Columbia is launched on Sunday, it will sail into orbit on the twentieth anniversary of the flight of Yuri Gagarin.

April 12 -- On the highway from Orlando again, I feel much better than I did driving back to the city Friday afternoon. When I finally got some sunburn lotion on my hands, I nearly passed out from relief. Then I had that drive to Orlando with the car's air conditioning doing its paltry best to keep me from screaming at the sun knifing through the windshield. Thank heaven for the blinds in disguise; if the car hadn't had power steering I wouldn't have been able to manage it. I couldn't even hold a pen to fill out the check-in information card at the hotel desk. The clerk took one look at me and said "You should see a doctor, sir."

But that was thirty-six hours ago, and I've been asleep for most of that time, with lots of medicine on the burn, and if I'm not exactly well yet, I'm at least able to function again. Now it's about one o'clock in the morning, and I have the road almost to myself. It's a different drive in darkness. With trees growing close on either side of the road, it's like driving down a straight and narrow gully. The air in the car is almost cold as the air conditioner hums quietly. I don't bother with the radio.

The closer I get to the cape, the heavier the traffic becomes. I'm glad I didn't get started any later. I've heard various figures for the number of people who came to watch the launch, from 750,000 to 1,000,000. Accept the lowest figure and discard a chunk for foreign visitors. That still means that at least one out of every three hundred citizens of this nation decided the event was important enough to demand their physical presence to see it happen. Let the congressmen who want to cut the NASA budget chew that one over.

There is fog, too, which begins as a few light wisps and thickens as the sea comes closer. This is after all, marsh land. By the time I get to Gate 3 the fog is so thick in the low spots that I can hardly see the bus a few yards ahead of me. I hold up my pass to the window and the guard waves me through.

The parking lot at the press site is, sure enough, filled to overflowing. I have to wait while the guard finds room to squeeze another couple of cars in, and after I'm parked he

goes to find another area to park the cars still streaming in behind me. The fog is not so bad here; perhaps we're at an elevated position, or perhaps the breeze here is enough to blow it away.

4:00 A.M. -- This night watch is almost an exact replay of the first terminal countdown two days ago. People talk quietly among themselves and wander among the trailers, occasionally strolling down to the water's edge for a closer look at the bird in its nest (as if they'll actually see more by moving a couple of hundred yards closer when the pad is more than three miles away). The cameramen don't move too far from their tripods; they guard their prime spots for viewing with a territorial fervor that would do Desmond Morris proud. Instead they listen to their radios. Some of the cameras are covered with plastic to protect them from the humid air, and the plastic is covered with dew. Halfway between the bleachers and the river bank, the countdown clock ticks its way backwards in huge yellow numerals.

The most important difference is that most of the mosquitos are gone. A faint odor of insecticide drifts on the breeze, and one of the cameramen confirms my suspicion that the area was heavily sprayed earlier that evening. No mosquitos, no sunburn pain -- the distractions are gone, leaving only a quiet joy. Overhead floats a blimp from OMNI magazine, spelling out a message of Godspeed to the Columbia career.

The text of President Reagan's message to Young and Crippen is available in the distribution center. A gracious message, I think, though there are those who will find in its words of simple optimism a sinister overtone: "Through you, today, we all feel as giants once again. Once again we feel the surge of pride that comes from knowing we are the first and we are the best and we are so because we are free."

I hope he remembers those words when he draws up the next national budget.

Out on the Kennedy Parkway, the van carrying the astronauts drives past the VAB on the way to the pad, surrounded by enough cars to make the whole procession look like a presidential motorcade.

6:00 A.M. -- Once again the count moves into its final hour. The crowd seems a little more tense, a little more expectant this time. It's almost as though the scrub on Friday was a bit of good showmanship to tease the audience: These people

want it to go today. A cheer goes up as the loudspeakers announce that the count is past the point where it got hung up on Friday. People are migrating down from the bleachers to the river, and little arguments are breaking out between the cameramen already established in position and the newcomers.

"I say, could you move a little to the right."

"I've been in this spot for three days. You'll just have to work around me. There's no place for me to move."

And still the bowstring draws down, second by second. Five minutes to go. The tension shows on our faces in different ways. Perhaps the most common expression is a tight grin, flashing across a face like a rictus or frozen in position by tight jaw muscles. Our breath comes faster, our pulse climbs. It might as well be us in that cockpit.

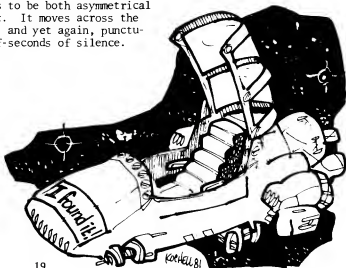
One minute.

There are certain expressions which we come across in our reading which are common enough to be cliché. They sound too much like a phrase of vivid literary imagination to be an accurate description of a physical phenomenon. You don't believe them until you witness them for yourself. I never believed fog could turn the ocean into a "vast gray bowl" until I sailed Loch Linnhe one evening. Now I must transfer yet another phrase from my personal catalog of artistic clichés to the catalog of real events: "A wave of excitement rippled through the crowd." That is most precisely, exactly what happens all around me. Like a wave, the gasping breaths and sounds from throats too tight to yell, more like a hoot or a bark, the half-conscious drawing up motion of hands and arms, the quick tension-relaxation of abdominal muscles, spills from person to person in the space of a few hammering heartbeats in a flow pattern that manages to be both asymmetrical and rhythmic. It moves across the crowd again, and yet again, punctuated by half-seconds of silence.

"Ten seconds", the loudspeakers announce in an echoing voice, and the crowd takes up the chant. Suddenly, looking through the viewfinder of my camera at the dull steel framework, flattened by the bright, uniform light of the morning sun, my eyes begin to burn. They are watering for no good reason and I can't see a damn thing and everything is blurry as I blink fiercely and they aren't waiting for me. Shutters of cameras all around me are beginning to click as the loudspeakers say the magic words:

"Main engines running".

Applause and cheers drown out the sound of the camera shutters. To the right of the pad, so tiny in my viewfinder to my still burning and blinking eyes, a white mist rises from the flame suppression hoses. To the left a thick brown rope of smoke curls outward from the solid booster engines. There was a flash as they ignited, but now the shuttle seems motionless on the pad and the flames are concealed in the smoke. I know that the tie-down clamps haven't been released yet, that they are waiting the few seconds necessary for all engines to build up thrust. Nevertheless, the thought flashes through my mind, as it must to most people standing there. Is she going to go? Then she is rising, a tiny black spearpoint on a shaft of flame. No, not a shaft of flame, a river, an avalanche of brilliant orange light, a waterfall of Da-Glo paint a dozen times longer than the puny craft which rides its nose. There is no gradual acceleration with solid boosters, no slow climb past the tower: Columbia rides up that gout of fire like the world's biggest mother elevator. The flames from the hydrogen-oxygen engines on the shuttle itself are almost invisible, swallowed up in the glare of those solid boosters trying to burn



a hole in the sky. I take pictures as fast as I can work the film advance, swearing at the speed with which she moves out of sight. This bird has *scat*! Nothing at all like the Saturn launch I witnessed.

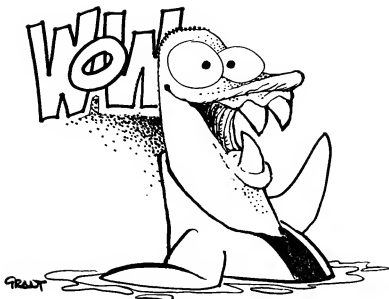
The sound hasn't hit us yet. I've heard repeatedly about how you can see the shock wave moving across the river, but with my eyes on the shuttle I forget to watch for it. Then I hear someone say "Here it comes!" and I drop my eyes to look, but the sound is already upon us. The lower frequencies rumble bassily in my chest cavity, while the higher frequencies crackle like the roar of a blast furnace. It's like the bomb blast Sensurround effects in the movie MIDWAY -- with the volume turned up. It requires a conscious effort to breathe.

Then the sound fades, and the light in the sky is gone.

Slowly I lower my eyes and look around. *Columbia* has gone from a dead start clear out of sight in the space of eighty seconds. The only thing left is that familiar brown pillar of smoke twisting gently in the breeze. I turn and start back up to the press bleachers. As I walk, I pass by a man standing behind his camera tripod with an expression that manages to be anguished and exultant at the same time. As he speaks to a friend he tosses his head in frustration: "I froze on the trigger! I didn't get a single picture!"

Out of sight in eighty seconds. As I finish walking the two hundred yards to the bleachers I pass beneath one of the loudspeakers. The NASA announcer is intoning: "Fifty-eight miles downrange ..."

9:30 A.M. -- After the launch I went back inside the Briefing Room to take a nap. The lights are still turned off, and in the cool darkness my dozing is little disturbed by the others who come in to watch the big TV screens. At one point I think I hear a gasp and someone saying the cameras show tiles missing from the *Columbia*, but I decide it must be a dream inspired by my own anxieties about this flight. Then I wake up and locate C.J. Cherry in the gloom and discover that it was no dream. The very first thing the astronauts (and the people watching through the eye of their onboard TV camera) saw when the cargo bay doors were opened was a couple of patches on the OMS pods where the tiles had come off. Just imagine for a moment that you are Young or Crippen. You've been told for ten years that your lives will depend on those tiles staying in place, and the first glimpse you get of the ship's exterior shows some of them have gone bye-bye.



The scene would be hilarious if it weren't so chilling. Neither the NASA spokesmen or the astronauts are showing much concern, and the missing tiles are not in a vital area, but the implications are obvious to everyone. If they've fallen off where we can see them, what makes us think they haven't fallen off where we can't? Carolyn is disgusted. She thinks it was stupid of them not to take a tile repair kit. Oh, well.

There are implications for future flights, too. Is every mission from now on going to include a space walk to visually inspect the tiles before reentry?

Now that the launch is over the crowds are emptying out of the area. I should be able to get a hotel room much closer than Orlando. After reassuring myself that the excitement is over for the day, I leave to see what I can find.

1:00 P.M.-- I locate a nice little motel room in Titusville, and as soon as I'm settled I plop down on the bed and turn on the TV for the latest news. "Issues and Answers" comes on shortly -- I have to force myself to remember that it's Sunday -- and who should we have than Senators Schmitt and Proxmire, with their seconds, to debate the value of the shuttle to America's future. Guess who picks which side.

I alternate between periods of boundless optimism and black despair for our space program, feelings made all the more acute because of a belief shared with Jerry Pournelle that our generation is in a unique position, that if we don't make it into space our children will never

be able to, and will curse our memory. On the other hand, it seems that the economics of space have an inexorable logic of their own which will inevitably render the natterings of the Proxmires a frivolous nuisance. We will be drawn into space because it is profitable to be there, even as it was profitable for our ancestors to build first ships, then planes. There can be no turning back. The job will be done. If not by our hands, then by others.

Then I look at Proxmire, and the feeling of confidence fades. For he is not a solitary voice. Make no mistake, he represents millions. I remember a conversation with friends a few months ago, where I argued that what the press and politicians had to say was no longer relevant, because those who have grown up in the years since Sputnik know the truth. But only last Wednesday night I listened to an Orlando news report of its "man on the street" opinion survey. The words of one thirtyish-looking man are burned in my memory. "It seems we've been spending all this money on space, and we really haven't got anything to show for it. Maybe we could be spending it on our poor people and help them'.

Here is Proxmire's constituency. Here is the argument we are confronted with time after time, which no amount of arguing seems to make a dent in. And watching Schmitt patiently refuting Proxmire point by point, I discover something. I do not care to argue any further with creatures of such incredible, overwhelming, vile ignorance. I do not care to put my case before eyes peering from beneath Neanderthal brows, to explain to them what their four-

year-old children understand perfectly. They're talking about a one-shot cure for diabetes that can only be manufactured in weightlessness, but so what? We're not going to convince anyone with logic, least of all the willfully ignorant. That a man can grow up almost in the shadow of our spaceport and still mouth the words spoken in that Orlando supermarket doesn't make me sad or tired any more. It makes me angry. These are the men who will steal our future if we let them, with a bovine blink of diffidence and lethargy. And I fear that they have a chance of doing just that. The irony is that they will never understand the value of what they throw away.

What's to be done? Yeah, write your congressman. We've all heard that before, even said it, but how many of us, in whom the dream lives, have bothered to actually do it? Here comes a cliché for you: to take no action is an action in itself. So start with the obvious. But then what? Try this one on for size: the space arcade games last year made as much money as was spent on the real space program. If somebody with the dream tapped into that market, we'd have a space lobbyist group with some real financial teeth.

April 14 -- It's been an interesting couple of days. Last night all three networks ran specials on the progress of the mission. As I switched back and forth between programs, there were two standouts. A Russian correspondent expressed his country's "concern" for the military's involvement in the shuttle program. A NASA spokesman nailed him to the wall with a question about Soviet military activity in space, about which he affected to know nothing. The other highlight was an interview with Tom Wolfe, author of *THE RIGHT STUFF*, a brilliantly perceptive look at the first few years of our manned space program. Wolfe's book is easily the best book I've read in the last ten years, so I was fascinated to hear him talk about the latest events in our national space effort.

NASA talks about all the wrong things, he says. They try to sell space on the basis of spinoffs like the Teflon flying pan or the pocket calculator because they're too embarrassed to talk about the real reason they're in business -- which is that "this is the greatest adventure in the history of mankind".

Indeed, NASA seems determined to mash every drop of romanticism out of the program. The official designation of Columbia's maiden flight says it all: STS-1. It sounds like a part number for a car

engine. There are those within the organization who have some sense of boyish enthusiasm, like the engineer who wrote a Country-Western song about Columbia called "The Mean Machine". It's the rage down here. They've even played it on the evening news, to footage of the crew working in the cabin. It's terrible -- but it has the right idea. "Aw-right!"

Now I'm back in the Briefing Room to watch the last big event of the flight. She went up in one piece. Is that how she will come down? The whole flight has been too good to be true. Surely something must go wrong now with the hard luck bird flying two years behind schedule. The tension has begun to mount once more.

The crowd is very thin here at Kennedy. Most of the reporters have left to be at the Edwards landing site. It really doesn't matter much, since we'll see and hear as much as they do on the TV monitors; they could have saved themselves a plane fare. But the tradition of reporters being "at the scene" persists. Columbia winds down her last orbit, dipping in and out of radio contact with the ground. The fact that so many communications stations have been closed down that NASA can't even maintain continuous contact with a shuttle crew is the most eloquent testimony I've seen of the effect of the budget cuts. The Capsule Communicator -- how long will we keep that anachronistic term? Will starships a hundred years from now be talking to capcoms on ground? -- wishes the crew luck and the engines come to life one last time for the retrofire burn, then the shuttle goes into radio blackout over the Pacific. This is a blackout a good deal different from the ones endured at the end of each mission up to now. The only two reentries that were as nerve-wracking were John Glenn's, when they weren't sure the heat shield was going to stay on, and Apollo 13, where so much else had gone wrong that they weren't certain all their efforts had been enough to get the crew safely into the reentry corridor.

Now everything hangs on those tiles. If they don't work, Columbia could reach the ground as a trickle of sifting ash. You can't hold your breath for fifteen minutes, but everyone would like to. There is less and less conversation in the room as the critical moment approaches for reestablishing contact with the crew. They are either riding comfortably through the fire or are burning alive at this very moment, and there is absolutely no way to

tell which. In silence we watch the chase planes, four T-38s (the same plane in which Young and Crippen practiced shuttle landings so many hundreds of times) which have taken off from Edwards minutes ago. Fred Haise, one of the Enterprise test pilots, is flying one of the planes.

Then Crippen's voice crackles down to us, and there is a deep sigh and scattered applause. In a few minutes we see a flash of sunlight off metal high in the western sky, and that spark swells and takes shape as the same beautiful flying boxcar that left the ground two days ago. Down comes the gear, one of the chaser planes tucked in neatly alongside like a dolphin beside a whale. And down, and down. And touchdown, fountains of dust cascading back from the wheels. Columbia rolls to a halt just at the intersection of two runways in a textbook landing. It's a nice touch, sitting there at that intersection as if some movie-maker planned the scene to end the show just that way. The applause drowns out the voice of the NASA announcer reporting the official time of touchdown, and several of the reporters in the room are upset with this juvenile display by their colleagues. Tough drafts.

It takes a while to get the crew out, and Young in particular voices his impatience with the delay. "We're gonna have to do better than this if we want to make these flights routine", he chides. Houston assures him that there are in fact toxic gases outside the shuttle which have to be cleaned up before the crew can safely leave the cabin.

"Must be those frankfurters we had for lunch!", quips an unidentified voice from Columbia.

Young's face says it all when they finally let him out. He walks around the ship shaking his head and punching the air with his fists. He is Moses coming down from the mountain, a witness to wonders beyond his fellow men.

I came here with some doubts about whether we could still do it. Those doubts are gone. But the fear remains that we will choose not to do it. I will live with that fear, and do what I can to make sure that it remains nothing more than a bad dream. For I also came away with just a little more belief in the words I've been wearing on a button this last week --

'The Meek Shall Inherit
the Earth;
The Rest of Us Will Go
to the Stars.'

chuck's latest bucket

by david gerrold

I'm looking at a neatly-bound, handsome little fanzine called THE PATCHIN REVIEW. It's subtitled, "The Unique and Controversial Guide to Science Fiction".

Well, yes -- it is unique. And it will certainly be controversial. The editor is Charles Platt. (Author of GARBAGE WORLD and PLANET OF THE VOLES.)

Let me tell you this about Charles Platt. He has a reputation in the science fiction community as being ... ah, dangerous to be near. Some years ago an unnamed author wrote what he called, "The Charles Platt Limerick". I reprint it with permission:

"Chuck is weird, let the whole world know it.

He brought in his bucket to show it.

We all had a fit,

When we saw it was shit.

We didn't know he was going to throw it."

THE PATCHIN REVIEW is Chuck's latest bucket. The targets (this time) apparently, are anyone who gets too close.

I'll be candid here. There are a lot of reasons why I do not want to do a column about THE PATCHIN REVIEW, not the least of which is that there is something distasteful about playing pattycake with the contents of Chuck's latest bucket. On the other hand, this fanzine is such a marvelous example, it is too good an opportunity to be missed.

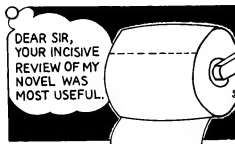
Chuck's editorial is the first thing in the fanzine. In it, he dedicates THE PATCHIN REVIEW to idealism. No, wait. I got that wrong. THE PATCHIN REVIEW is dedicated to [*]*E*[*]*I*[*]*S*[*]*M. (Translation: God is on our side.) The key phrase is usually something like: "I'm doing this for your own good". Which means: "I'm about to hurt you terribly, but because I've told you in advance, you don't have the right to get pissed off at me". Or in Chuck's words: "I see a particular need for idealism as an antidote to the ennui (in science fiction) which developed in the 1970s and has yet to leave us." Remember that. Idealism. It's the justification for what's to follow.

First up at the plate is Barry Malzberg. He begins with an oblique paragraph about DREAMSNAKE, LORD VAL-ENTINE'S CASTLE, THE OPHIOUCH HOT-LINE, THE SNOW QUEEN and CALLAHAN'S CROSSTIME SALOON -- all of which have been extremely popular books, but which somehow fail to live up to Malzberg's definition of righteous science fiction. He blames the editors. And the corporate system of publishing science fiction. Right. If the team doesn't produce a pen-nant, blame the manager. Or blame the fact that the game's become commercial. Never mind. Malzberg is only here to lend an air of depressing respectability. Like that big blue bald eagle on The Muppet Show.

Next up is Harlan Ellison.... No matter that Harlan considers himself to be anything but a science fiction writer; he's parked himself square at the center of the community and he can't help but be involved in it. Harlan uses his space here to drag up the old familiar metaphor of himself as gunslinger and the new punk in town (John Shirley) as the peachfuzz kid. You know how it goes: "Draw, Mister!" "Nope. When you're number-one gun, you don't pull on playboys."

It was clever the first time. About ten years ago. Now, in its thirty-leventh incarnation, it's boring.

Apparently John Shirley sent Ellison some angry letters, something to the effect that Harlan is a phony, Shirley is the real thing. (Oh?)



Harlan, sighing wearily (I kid you not), eases his tired old bulk out into the dusty street of this one-horse town and regretfully issues his challenge to the kid in the cowboy suit. "Draw" A duel to the death. Short stories at twenty yards. The loser quits science fiction.

It's a good performance, but I liked it better with Gary Cooper.

The editor notes that John Shirley will reply in the next issue. I admit I'm interested to see his reply. If he accepts the challenge, he loses. If he finds a reason to dismiss the challenge, he loses. Good job, Harlan. You set it up so the kid in the cowboy suit is going to be discredited no matter what he does.

Next, there are a couple of quotes taken out of context, from books by G. Harry Stine and John Norman. The intent of the exercise is to embarrass. The editor's words here: "Once in a while an author will unintentionally reveal his or her true self. It can be in a careless phrase which exposes the author's prejudices, or a paragraph which perfectly captures bad habits of style." The intent is to show how much more we know than they do. Right.

That's followed by "Advice to the Alienated" by "Cousin Clara". It's about writing workshops. "Cousin Clara" says: "Have writing workshops made an impact on the science fiction field ...? One need only count the hordes of internationally famous authors who have emerged from such events, or examine the standards of literary excellence that have prevailed in science fiction during the last fifteen years, for the answer to become self-evident." You can interpret that as you wish.

Following that is a treatise by one "John Smith" who is upset that science fiction "has not kept pace with (science's) ... shift of emphasis from a classical mentality to a theoretical mentality." There is nothing particularly upsetting here -- except the fact that John Smith feels the need to hide behind a pseudonym. This is such a dangerous idea, he won't even sign his name to it.

Then there's the gossip column, TALES TO ASTONISH by "Gabby Snitch". Suffice it to say that "Snitch" has nothing nice to say about anyone. It's like eavesdropping on two fifteen-year-old gossips at a STAR TREK convention. Terribly exciting if you know who they're talking about. Otherwise, terribly dull. I'm told that the column is being dropped. Some of the people mentioned in it didn't get the joke.

Moving right along, we stumble into John Shirley's REFUGE FOR THE INDOLENT. Shirley states his position in his very first line: "The science fiction field is in dire need of higher, tougher standards". Shirley does not say who should set or enforce those standards; it is obvious who he believes is best qualified. He begins by sitting in judgment on Barry Longyear, Orson Scott Card and Larry Niven, with some side-swipes at Harry Harrison, Alan Dean Foster, Poul Anderson and Jerry Pournelle along the way. At the end of the journey, he states the standards he wishes to see in the field. They're straight out of the first year writing texts. It's old news. Most writers already know them. We just choose to apply them in our own ways.

Then there's an article by "Jane Doe" called "Have You Hugged Your Editor Today?" It is by an editor who seems to be miffed that writers do not appreciate their editors enough. Translation: "What do you people want? You never had it so good." (Where have we heard that before? Oh, now I remember -- just before the riot started.)

Next is "I Was a Sci-Fi Bride", also by "Jane Doe" -- but not necessarily the same Jane Doe -- a one-page tract on how dull science fiction writers really are.

And finally, there are the reviews. 64 books are summed up with one or two-line judgments. Examples: "Simplistic 1972 liberal vision..." "Somewhat self important..." "... sticky with bogus lyricism." "In selecting the authors from whom he steals his ideas and voicing, P---- shows sound judgment..." "... silly stylistic affectations..." "Large print, small story..." "A weary theme..." And so on.

That's it. 36 pages. 18 sheets of 8 1/2 X 11" paper, folded over inside a stiff pink cover. Chuck's latest bucket.

I admit it, I found this fanzine very interesting. It held my attention from cover to cover. I even agreed with a lot of what I read. Overall, the contents were funny, well-written, challenging, clever, exciting and occasionally intelligent.

And I admit this, I look forward to the next issue with no small amount of enthusiasm -- to see who else gets a turn in the bucket. (So far I haven't, but I assume it's inevitable.) The only thing is, THE PATCHIN REVIEW takes itself so damned seriously.

And that's what disturbs me.

Turn back to the title page. After Chuck's editorial, there are nine entries. Three of the authors (Harlan Ellison, Barry Malzberg and John Shirley) are willing to stand behind their own opinions. Five of the authors are not, preferring instead to use pseudonyms: John Smith, Jane Doe, Gabby Snitch, Cousin Clara. Ote. (There is no identifying credit for the reviews either.)



So, what we have here is barely one step above an anonymous poison pen letter. Have you ever gotten one? "You're an asshole, and I'm just the fellow to point it out. (Except I'm not courageous enough to sign my name. You might hate me.)"

But, of course, the people responsible for this particular bucket know that it isn't really a poison pen letter -- because it's all been done in the name of I*H*E*A*L*E*S*M. (Listen, you can hear harps in the background.)

I will make my reply succinct: bullshit.

What we have here is another tiresome exercise in righteousness. It's very easy to identify righteousness. Righteousness is based on the ridiculous premise that if you can prove the other side wrong, it automatically validates how wonderful you are.

We've all done it. I have. (Lots of times.) So have you. It doesn't have to be anything as flamboyant as, "All you commie-fag-pinkies are going to roast in Hell because God is on my side!" It can be something as simple as: "Those people just don't understand science fiction like I do. Why won't they listen to me?"

The thing about righteousness is that it almost always produces results that are exactly the opposite of what was intended -- or claimed to be intended.

Take another look inside Chuck's latest bucket. In the name of idealism, Chuck and his gang have sat in judgment on their colleagues and found them wanting. In the name of idealism, they've sent anonymous poison pen letters in public.

In the name of idealism, they've acted like a bunch of spoiled brats who are mad as hell that somebody else got three awards and a \$500,000 contract while they didn't get any awards and only a \$10,000 contract. (A lot of the issue is about money and awards -- as if somehow, these things are measurements of quality. They're not. They're only measurements of popularity and commerciality. Quality is usually independent of these things.)

Every single article in THE PATCHIN REVIEW stinks of that kind of righteousness. Science fiction is going to hell, and we're just the bunch to save it. Let me quote Barry Malzberg, "It is the fibrillating heart of science fiction itself to which I would like to administer CPR have I but the wit, the cunning and the cool refusal to panic." It's too late, Malzberg, you already have.

No matter how honorable, how justifiably right the goal may be, the means chosen to achieve it will determine what is actually accomplished. What's being accomplished here is not the elevation of science fiction standards, but another game of uproar in the community.

These are three of the most innovative writers in science fiction, an editor who's been around long enough to know better, and five cowards, all acting like their own worst enemies. These are the people who want to demonstrate the high standards that the rest of us should aspire to live up to?! That's a mountain of horse cookies! Come on down off it, guys! I don't want to hurt myself laughing.

Now, do you see how insidious righteousness can be? I got plugged into it too.

SMALL PRESS NOTES

BY THE EDITOR

EMPIRE---for The SF Writer---#25, \$2.
 Edited by Mary Kittredge
 Empire SF,
 35 Sherman Court
 New Haven, CT 06511

This magazine, though overpriced, is of definite interest and value to those who are trying and want to be sf writers, as well as to those aficionados and collectors who want the "inside sf" view of such as Stanley Schmidt, Ellen Datlow (OMNI), Darrell Schweitzer & George Scithers (ASIMOV'S), Barry Longyear and others. They provide current info and career advice. There is a listing of agents who handle sf writers. There is a beginner's story and analysis and criticism by Eric Vinicoff, Jacqueline Lichtenberg and Gene Wolfe.

NEW LIBERTARIAN---OCT. 81 \$2.
 Edited by Samuel E. Konkin III
 New Libertarian Enterprises,
 POB 1748,
 Long Beach, CA 90801

Essentially devoted to the libertarian philosophy and way-of-life and condemning those among the fold who aren't pure or are revisionists or deviationists.

I have a column in each issue called "The Savage Pen." I have fun, though I don't bother with the stupid little power struggles and back-biting that occupies others in the movement.

The magazine is interesting and in many ways an education, in ways SEK III doesn't intend.

THE MIDNIGHT SON \$9.95
 Written and Illustrated by Steven B. Miller
 Four Winds Press [A Division of Scholastic, Inc., N.Y.]

Essentially a children's high-class comic book with a Good Message. Suitable for libraries and parents.

It is the story of a human boy in the far center of the universe who rides in a giant metal bird-shaped spaceship and who is seeking from planet to planet for that thing or knowledge which will make him whole and finally happy.

He lands on a small green planet inhabited by talking, civilized animals (a la Disney) who try to help him.

Finally, after descending into a tunnel and cavern complex called



The Path of the Midnight Sun, he survives monsters and dangers and a test of courage---and becomes whole, psychically, and leaves the planet a happy boy.

Very Nice and inspiring and redolent of rites of passage.

This is labeled science fiction but is pure fantasy and metaphysics. The graphic story style and techniques are excellent, top-professional, and simple-storytelling. Only the cover is in color.

THE PATCHIN REVIEW #2 \$2.50 one ish.
 Edited and Published by Charles Platt
 9 Patchin Place
 New York, NY 10011.

This issue is a bit less outrageous and more disciplined. Also more interesting and valuable as Algis Budrys, Brian Aldis, Edward Bryant, Tom Disch, Janet Morris, Alfred Bester, John Shirley and others play many of each other in detail for writing lousy, flawed novels, and take sf apart, limb from limb, examine entrails, and call to the Gods for better writing, editing and publishing.

An exciting magazine. Copies of #1 are available for \$3.50 each.

THE TANELORN ARCHIVES \$7.95
 A PRIMARY AND SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WORKS OF MICHAEL MOORCOCK 1949 - 1979
 Compiled by Richard Bilyeu
 Original artwork by Steve Leialoha
 Pandora's Books Ltd.
 Box 1298, Altona,
 Manitoba R0G 0B0, CANADA

This is replete with photos of covers, listings of early pulp-days stories, Michel's book reviews in

latter days, his editorials in NEW WORLDS, his scripting for comic strips, his music, his films, his letters to fan publications such as LOCUS, SFR, THRUST....

Michael Moorcock has not been strictly a fiction writer. Besides all of the above he has authored war games, has self-published....

Richard Bilyeu has even listed the blurbs Michael has written for others' books, and there is a category titled "Moorcock Influenced Material--Fiction" and one for non-fiction.

Truly, everything you might want to know about Michael Moorcock's created works is here documented, as of 1979.

The book is large-size quality softcover, with a fine full-color painting as a cover.

THE SCIENCE FICTION REFERENCE BOOK
 Edited by Marshall B. Tymn
 \$20.00 hardcover, \$14.95 softcover.
 Starmont House
 PO Box 851, Mercer Island, WA 98040

This 536 page book, with cover and interior illustrations by Vincent Di Fate, is subtitled:

A COMPREHENSIVE HANDBOOK AND GUIDE TO THE HISTORY, LITERATURE, SCHOLARSHIP, AND RELATED ACTIVITIES OF THE SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FIELDS

It certainly is. There are four major sections: Backgrounds, Fandom, Academe, and Appendices.

Overall the book's function is to acquaint the educated newcomer to the long-term phenomenon that is sf and fantasy and its sub-culture. And more specifically, this book is a must-have for any teacher of science fiction and/or fantasy in high school or college coming into the multifaceted subject with anything less than a lifetime of experience and knowledge.

There is an invaluable 19-page index.

VIRGIL FINLAY REMEMBERED
 Edited by Gerry de la Ree. \$10.00
 7 Cedarwood Lane
 Saddle River, NJ 07458

This is the latest De la Ree collection of Finlay's art, and is in the usual letter-size, high-quality offset softcover format.

Gerry enclosed a note with this review copy saying:
 "Please note that the edition is limited to 1000 copies---800 paperback and 200 hardcover (at \$20.). Only about 50 HC copies remain as of this date ((July 15)) (and) half of the PB copies are gone, too."

This long series of reproductions of Virgil Finlay magazine (and other) sf (and other) illustrations has been very popular. Finlay's stipple and cross-hatch pen style and realistic anatomy and meticulous attention to detail has endured through the decades, and is a tribute to his skill, talent, and probably the basic conservatism of sf and fantasy readers and editors. Conservative in that they like the creatures, scenes and people in their stories to be made real and convincing by the illustrator. Virgil Finlay certainly did that.

His equal today, in my opinion, is Stephen Fabian. In fact, I think Steve is superior. And I suspect strongly that in decades to come future devotees will be buying collections of Fabian art.

ANARCHY COMICS #3 \$2.50
COCAINE COMIX #3 \$2.00
DR. ATOMIC #6 \$2.00
DOPIN' DAN \$2.00
WEIRDO #2 \$2.75

All of the above available from Last Gasp, PO Box 212, Berkeley, CA 94704. All prices above are single-copy-by-mail prices.

ANARCHY COMICS, by Paul Mavrides and Jay Kinney, and others is a howl of rage at rip-off, conformist, people-control establishments everywhere, and a celebration of revolt (mostly by the individual). It's emotional, irrational, idealist...and it's jive and snark. But if you need that anarchy fix--here it is: simple reactionary, solipsistic food for simple infantile minds.

COCAINE COMIX is more of a series of warnings about the evils of drugs than propaganda for drugs.

There is a lot of sex, trips, alien uglies, and some fascinating, repellent single-page drawings--especially the backcover.

The covers of all these anti-establishment comix are almost all far better than the interior art.

DR. ATOMIC follows a graybeard screwloose scientist on a science-fiction adventure titled "The Charlots of the Sun." Larry Todd wrote and drew it: boring in spite of non-stop action.

DOPIN' DAN, by Ted Richards, follows a modern-day private into a speculative World War III, and into everyday fuckups through the rest of the magazine. Ehh! Occasionally good satire and humor.

WEIRDO features the art and humor

of R. Crumb. That's fine. But in between are a dumb photo spread of a young woman dressed as a little girl--showing panty crotch in almost every picture, and other comix art and stories by less talented drawers and hewers.

Again--the cover promises more than the contents delivers. Far more care and quality control should go into these magazines...even if they are aimed at knee-jerk counter-culturists and emotional cripples.

DICTIONARY OF LITERARY BIOGRAPHY
VOLUME 8: TWENTIETH-CENTURY
AMERICAN SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS
(TWO VOLUMES) [\$124.00/set]
Edited by David Cowart and Thomas Wymer
Gale Research Co.
Book Tower, Detroit, MI 48226

All of the major sf writers, past and present, are here (90 of them) in biographical/critical display, from Anderson to Zelazny.

Also included in the second volume: appendixes which discuss/trace trends in sf, art in sf, paperbacks, films, SFNA, and sf fandom. Also provided are lists of the Hugo and Nebula awards from their beginning to 1980. And lists of important sf works, magazines and anthologies...even a list of books for further reading in the field.

The writers and researchers include many, many long-time sf fans and aficionados, as well as academics.

Among those authors included are William S. Burroughs (questionable, since his bizarre drug novels were not intended to be sf), Ray Bradbury (a fantasist, surely), Harlan Ellison (who has labored mightily for years to not be labeled a science fiction writer), and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (who also doesn't

want to be known as an sf writer).

The authors propose...and the academics dispose, I suppose.

There are photos of the authors, sample pages of manuscripts, lists of their works.

These volumes are of course printed on the best gloss book paper, bound in top-quality reference book format and bindings... Designed to last longer than your lifetime. Designed for libraries, primarily.

A REFERENCE GUIDE TO AMERICAN SCIENCE FICTION FILMS (\$29.95 cloth) by A.W. Strickland and Forrest J. Ackerman

T.I.S. Publications
1928 Arlington Road
Bloomington, IN 47401

This is vol. 1 of four. It provides stills, casts, producers, directors, writers of the screenplays, a synopsis of the plot, much technical data--of relevant films from 1897 onward, year by year. This volume carries up to year 1929. There is an index and many informational appendices.

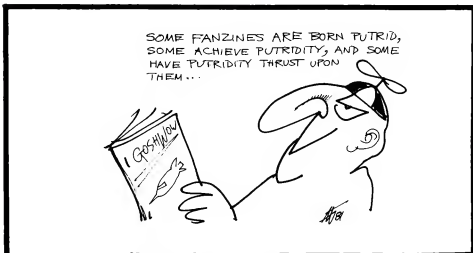
High quality cloth binding, large-size pages, heavy dust jacket. Only available in hardcover.

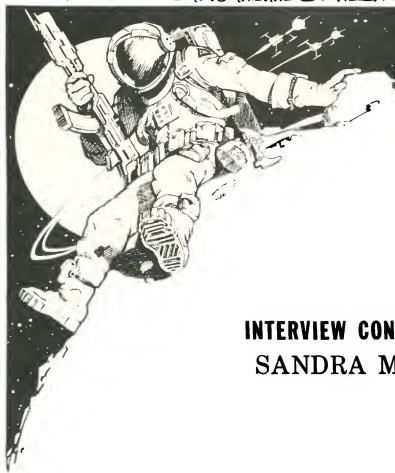
An exhaustive, fascinating reference book.

GEIS NOTE: There are a lot of small press items stacked up on my left, awaiting notice, review...and of course no room left in which to dispose of them.

Some of these will be attended to by Darrell Schweitzer in his small press [fiction] review column next issue. He was too busy with his job and his increasingly successful writing of fiction to write a column for this issue of SFR.

I continue amazed at the variety and quality of fan publications that appear. We are truly in a golden age of fan/aficionado/semi-pro publishing. More attention must be paid them.





MICHAEL WHELAN

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY SANDRA MIESEL

In 1974, a new star appeared in the science fictional heavens -- Michael Whelan. Since his graduation from San Jose State University, his scores of cover paintings for Ace, Ballantine, DAW, Pocket Books, and other publishers have brought him two Hugo Awards as Best Professional Artist as well as many other awards. The tall, blonde, California-born artist now makes his home in Brookfield, Connecticut with his equally blonde wife Audrey Price and daughter Alexa.

Whelan's trademark is a distinctive combination of coolness and lushness. His subjects are aloof, oblivious to observation. His stop-action brush captures fabulous beings in the midst of adventures that seem to be occurring in some unique space of their own. Although Whelan emphasizes color rather than line, he has a fondness for detail that might be termed "hyper-realistic". His sharply-focussed depictions of costumes, props and settings have enormous audience appeal. This approach is equally useful for narrative or symbolic imagery, as the accompanying illustrations demonstrate.

SFR: Let's start at the beginning; how did you get interested in SF and SF art?

WHELAN: I wouldn't differentiate between the two since I got interested in both at the same time. My earliest memories associated with SF are of me going through my father's crate of old SF magazines. The art really hit me -- this was before I could even read. And of course I went to a lot of SF and horror movies. That's all visual impact. I remember when I was very young, four or five, going to see the movie *THE MYSTERIANS*, a cheap Japanese science fiction film, and coming home and drawing my own versions of certain scenes. To this day I can remember exactly what these drawings looked like -- domes, flying saucers and things like that.

SFR: As you went through art school, at what point did you decide -- or was there ever a conscious decision -- to become an SF illustrator?

WHELAN: I knew I'd always be painting and drawing things of that nature, but I was really influenced by my parents' desire for me to be

involved in a career that was a steady job and would bring me lots of money. I always thought that ruled out being an SF illustrator; indeed, being an illustrator of any sort.

Until I was in college I was planning to major in the biological sciences and possibly become a doctor. It wasn't really until my sophomore or junior year of college that I couldn't bear to do anything else other than be an illustrator. I kept taking anatomy and physiology courses simply because that interested me but the emphasis at that point swung to being an artist.

SFR: Do you attribute the quality of your figure drawing to your mastery of the medical aspects of anatomy?

WHELAN: Yes. I've done a lot of dissection. I've studied my share of corpses in the tradition of Michelangelo and others to familiarize myself with the structure and placement of muscle masses. It's helped me a lot in drawing aliens because you get a feel for comparative anatomy and how to extrapolate beyond what exists already.

SFR: What were some of the mainstream influences on your career?

WHELAN: I've always liked Norman Rockwell. There are so many! "Illustrators" probably affect me more than "fine artists". Fine artists that deviate from representation do not interest me very much. These are some of the artists I like: Pyle, the Wyeths, Maxfield Parrish and a very good Czech painter who later became a cubist -- Frantizek Kujka. There are a lot of others that don't occur to me right away...

SFR: What SF artists have influenced you?

WHELAN: They're varied -- I don't think any artist whose work I like hasn't influenced me. When I tell people, for example, that Paul Lehr or Richard Powers has affected my work in a certain way, they can't believe it. Yet I can point to things in my paintings that were influenced by those two guys.

SFR: John Schoenherr says he's influenced by Cartier yet who can see it? It doesn't mean you paint exactly alike, just that certain work has stimulated your creativity in some unique manner.

WHELAN: Right. There's a lot of others you could name, such as Ed Emshwiller. I'd say the ones who did not affect me were early artists like Frank R. Paul. I wasn't exposed to their work during my youth and now I don't care for it. It looks too corny or dated to me.

SFR: There appears to be some resemblance between you and Emsh. Did you ever notice that the same blonde woman keeps showing up in his covers? You can always tell an Emsh by that even if you can't see the signature.

WHELAN: Most artists develop stock faces. In fact, that's a great stumbling block for a lot of us. With me, there's this slightly Oriental-looking female face Audrey is always kidding me about. It happens subconsciously. It's only later that I realize that I've done it and have to go back and correct it. There are times when it's justified -- like in FLANDRY OF TERRA by Poul Anderson where the people are Mongolian -- I lucked out. It's a matter of being true to the story but a lot of times it's a habit and I have to watch it.

SFR: You also keep painting these cool, pale, aquiline-featured blonde men, for example in Poul Anderson's NIGHT FACE. Surely they aren't modeled on yourself?

WHELAN: No, they never are, except for the one in WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE by Alan Dean Foster. Audrey didn't actually pose for that cover either. I did her mostly from memory. She was at work that day so it doesn't look as much like her as I wish it did.

SFR: Kelly Freas and Boris Vallejo use models extensively and set up photographs of draperies and such. Do you ever do this, or do you work strictly from your imagination?

WHELAN: I did use a model for FLANDRY and for some of the Burroughs books. If I need clothing, sometimes I put it on myself and pose in front of a mirror to see which way the wrinkles go. Occasionally, every fourth or fifth painting, I'll use a Polaroid camera to take pictures. For instance, if there's a difficult hand pose, I'll have Audrey hold her hand that way or I'll use my own and take the picture with the other hand.

SFR: Do you ever construct models?

WHELAN: Only once. I made a Tars Tarkas for a PRINCESS OF MARS out of plasticine -- just the head. The body's constructed out of my imagination.

SFR: Clearly, as the horsebreeders say, you "nick" with certain authors: Moorcock, Burroughs, McCaffrey. I like your interpretation of Poul Anderson's Dominic Flandry and your version of the Mouser for Fritz Leiber's FAFHRD and the Gray Mouser series.

WHELAN: Thanks, the Leiber was fun. I wish I could have done the rest of the series but they never repackaged the other volumes.

SFR: Would you care to talk about your book, WONDERWORKS?

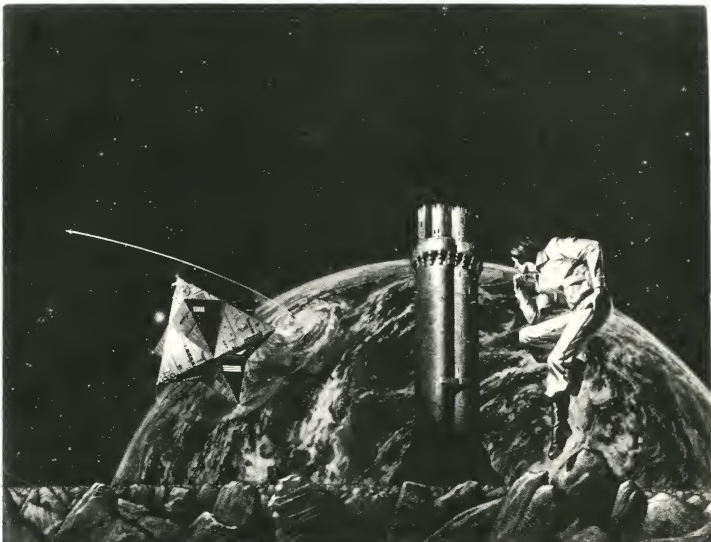
WHELAN: It's a big art book -- 120



ANNOUNCING

ALEXA MARI PRICE-WHELAN
9 1/2" x 12" - 22 inches
newly arrived on planet Earth
at

3:02 p.m., November 2, 1980



"THE FINAL ENCYCLOPEDIA" © (1980 MICHAEL WHELAN) ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

pages -- with about a hundred illustrations, half of them in color. There are commentaries on the plates by myself plus written pieces by Poul Anderson, C.J. Cherryh, Michael Moorcock, Anne McCaffrey, Alan Dean Foster and Jerry Page. It's introduced by Kelly Freas and published by the Donning Company of Virginia Beach, Virginia.

SFR: I've seen a softbound copy of *WONDERWORKS*, but frankly, I thought the reproduction was not as good as that of Kelly Freas's book, *THE ART OF SCIENCE FICTION*.

WHELAN: Some of the plates of the first few thousand softcovers (which were primarily sold abroad) needed some corrections and Donning corrected most of them for the second run. The majority of the softcovers and all the hardcovers and limited editions are much improved. I wish Donning had done it right in the first place and saved us all a lot of hassles, but that's what publishing is like.

SFR: Most of the works you exhibit are acrylic paintings. Do you have any interest in drawing black and white illustrations?

WHELAN: Drawing and painting are the same thing, just different media, but I prefer color work. Lines get in the way for me. I like to make a painting a window into another world. Black and white is not quite there. Although I really appreciate good line work, in my own interiors I've gotten away from working in line. Rather than have a piece be an exercise in technique, I'd rather have the technique be "not there" so the person can see through the technique into whatever kind of world I'm trying to create.

SFR: Do you have any anecdotes about difficult assignments?

WHELAN: At one time Ace was giving me mere synopses. I'd just get a small section of a whole book -- two or three pages. So I'd do my

best to come up with a cover scene that mirrored what I'd read. In one particular assignment, I was sorry to discover that a main character in the scene was supposed to have only one arm and I'd gotten the costuming wrong -- it wasn't mentioned in the material I'd received.

Also, many times when you're illustrating a series, you find that bits and pieces of background appear in only one book. If you're doing another volume and get the details wrong, it's too bad! For example, I did the cover for *THE WHITE DRAGON* by Anne McCaffrey before I did the ones for *DRAGONFLIGHT* and *DRAGON-QUEST*. I had to read both of those as well before attempting *THE WHITE DRAGON* cover so that I'd have an accurate idea of the dragons and of Pern. If there's anything I like to do, it's to be as accurate as possible to what the author's written.

SFR: Are you now allowed to read the entire manuscript?

WHELAN: Not only allowed, I insist

upon it. This request is sometimes met with wide open eyes because they are not used to artists asking for the book.

SFR: What do you see as the field's current weaknesses?

WHELAN: There are few recognized standards of quality. Often, the merely outrageous, even if it's poorly executed, is admired. Also, when something's as popular and faddish as SF art is now, it's not accepted by the purveyors of fine art.

SFR: Do you foresee a time when SF art might become respectable?

WHELAN: Definitely. It's just a matter of time.

SFR: You have said illustrating the Burroughs Mars series fulfilled a dream.

WHELAN: I never thought I'd get a chance to do that series until I was in my forties or fifties. It never occurred to me that it would already happen and I would have to seek for something beyond that. But it did! In doing that series, I've lost my love for my labor of love.

SFR: Sometimes one can no longer appreciate an author after studying him too minutely. The fun evaporates.

WHELAN: This is what happened in the John Carter series. I re-read them again for the first time in years. I was much more conscious of their juvenile content, their naivete. Also the attitude of the people I had to deal with, the Burroughs people themselves, spoiled things. They ruined all the fun (and kept all the rights!). The experience was mostly a disappointment.

SFR: You've had an unusually rapid rise in illustration. The first time you exhibited, at the 1974 World SF Convention, I was an art show judge. I distinctly remember the little knot of judges gathering around your panel and murmuring things like: "Promising. Who is this guy? Looks good." These judges included Jack Gaughan and John Schoenherr. Your art made a good impression on everyone against stiff competition.

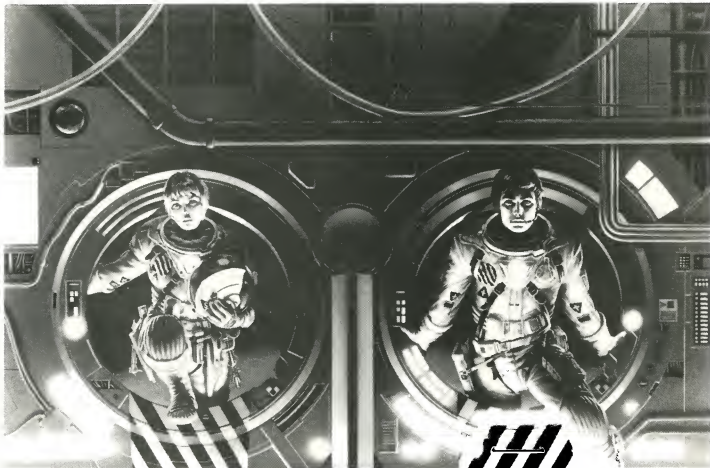
WHELAN: I was so shocked! I was living in Burbank and going to school at the Art Center College of Design

in L.A. I sent it in on a whim -- I had very little confidence at the time. I still wasn't sure what I wanted to do, whether I'd be able to make a "living" at it. When I sent these things out, I wasn't working professionally but I entered them as professional work. Winning a first prize in fantasy and an honorable mention in SF convinced me that I ought to be able to make it.

SFR: After finishing your formal training, was the Real World a jolt?

WHELAN: Not at all. Fortunately, I found immediate acceptance from the first few people I went to for jobs. The rude awakening was realizing that I had to be the person to limit how much work I was willing to take. In art school they were always telling me how I was going to have to "pound the pavement" and scramble for jobs and take anything that came my way. It worked out the opposite: Every place I went threw jobs at me and I would wind up really overloading myself for a period. That was the rudest awakening that I was my own worst boss.

SFR: Do you have any advice for the aspiring young SF artist?





"WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE" © 1977 MICHAEL WHELAN all rights reserved.

WHELAN: Since the publication of *WONDERWORKS*, I've been deluged with letters asking for advice, so I've made up a form letter for that purpose. It kind of parallels what Stanley Kubrick said to people who asked him about film making: "Get a camera and start shooting". The same is true for an illustrator -- work, work, work. Do only what you want to do but work at it -- when I was in college, I was drawing every spare minute that I had.

If you really "need" to be a good illustrator -- need rather than want -- then you'll search out the things you require to become what you want to be. You'll pick out the books that seem to offer the kind of advice you want, you'll look for good art schools. The important thing is to have the desire in the first place, the motivation.

SFR: Has your unusually rapid rise to prominence changed your life? Most artists starve for years before attracting notice.

WHELAN: That's a hard thing to answer. I suppose I have a greater sense of contrast between the time when I was working in a chicken coop -- literally! -- and the time now when I'm doing much better. Perhaps because of that I appreciate it all the more. My attitude now is to enjoy it as much as possible while it's happening, while trying to protect my own future, realizing that not all good things necessarily last forever.

SFR: The younger artists generally seem to be better businessmen than the older ones.

WHELAN: That's a major influence Audrey's had on me; she's very good at separating the business from the other aspects of being an artist. Even though I've been kicking and screaming all the way, she's forced me to pay attention to details and not let myself get ripped off.

SFR: Does Audrey play a direct role in your career?

WHELAN: She's taking an increasing role because of the quantity of work and correspondence is such that I'm having a difficult time handling it all and still be able to spend ten or twelve hours a day painting. I also depend on some honest commentary from her. She's good at critiquing my paintings. She's got a perfect memory and knows what I'm looking for. She doesn't accept excuses for mistakes so I'll go ahead and fix them and be that much happier with my own piece of work.

SFR: Since Audrey had her own career operating a nursery school before you were married, surely she's less likely than some wives to be content with a subordinate position.

WHELAN: I don't want her to. We're trying to figure out a way so that kind of situation doesn't come up. One of our solutions is having her

be a salaried worker. We've also started a print business, Glass Onion Graphics, and she's the president of that. The finances are very strictly dealt with.

Audrey did a large portion of the work on WONDERWORKS, too. If we do more books in the future, we may have her produce the entire book and just have me supply the artwork. She could design it any way she wanted to and sell the package.

SFR: Audrey, do you have any comments on being an artist's helpmate?

PRICE: That's something that has concerned me from the beginning. Some other artists' wives have a reputation of being nasty trying to fight for their husbands' rights. I certainly don't want to be thought of in those terms. I'd like to be thought of as someone who is smart businesswise and who would not let things get out of hand where Michael is concerned. Yet I would also like people to think of me as friendly and approachable.

So far it hasn't gotten to the point where it's all Michael's glory and I'm nobody. I'm very fortunate. At conventions people are really just as eager to talk to me. It's not everybody crowding around Michael and I get left standing on the side; I really am included as a person. I'm not a very passive personality -- I can't really see myself getting lost in the shuffle. After having had my own business and being the top person, I'm used to getting attention because I have something to say, not just because I'm Michael's wife.

SFR: Michael, when you aren't working, do you attend many SF conventions?

WHELAN: We only go to three or so a year: The World Fantasy Convention, the World SF Convention and one or two regionals like Disclave or Boskone.

SFR: Do you enjoy these outings?

WHELAN: It depends. The problem with me at conventions is that they are very author-oriented and I don't get a whole lot out of them. When I go to a convention, my favorite thing to do is to visit the hucksters' room, see the movies and visit with other people.

SFR: Do you belong to any of the professional associations? Are artists' groups useful?

WHELAN: I think so. I'm a member of the Society of Illustrators and the Graphic Artists Guild. They've

been about as helpful to me (and other illustrators) as any such organization can be. I'm not convinced that we have much to gain by working within such a small and specialized group as the Association of SF Artists. For the most part, the best service ASFA can perform is to promote SF and fantasy art as a viable form and hopefully help us to gain respectability outside our own small world.

However, our career problems are shared with all illustrators and seem to be different only in that we generally get paid less. The print run is usually lower for SF and fantasy and our fees reflect that. Publishers are not out to discriminate against SF illustrators per se -- all illustrators have difficulties with publishers. As far as working conditions go, I feel that we have more to gain by working as a large group.

SFR: Have you ever had to seek help from any of the organizations you mentioned?

WHELAN: Indirectly. When I was getting started on the John Carter series, I was having a lot of trouble getting the price I wanted, trying to sell only one-time rights (as I do with my other work), and retaining ownership of the originals. The Burroughs people via Ballantine were really tough, so I called the Society of Illustrators and they recommended a lawyer to help me. In the end I got my price up a little and retained ownership of the paintings. I wasn't able to keep the rights, but at that point I still wanted to do the job badly enough to agree to that.

As an aside, Ballantine told me that I was the first artist who had ever used a lawyer to fight them on something. If that's true, it's no wonder illustrators get shafted a lot. Can you imagine any other field where people enter into contractual arrangements regularly as a usual part of their work, who don't use lawyers? Frequently, illustrators seem to forget that they are in business for themselves and that they should handle themselves in a businesslike way.

SFR: Speaking of originals, do you ever sell your paintings after publication?

WHELAN: Yes, we keep our personal favorites, but all of the others go up for sale at some time. I've had some really successful one-man shows so they've helped to prompt me to save more of my paintings for shows and concentrate on developing a gallery following.

SFR: And now you're turning publisher as well.

WHELAN: Well, that's Audrey's department.

PRICE: We've published several posters, prints and photoprints that we sell by direct mail and through dealers. Now, Glass Onion is big enough that I've had to hire outside help. If anyone is interested in a catalogue, they can write to 172 Candlewood Lake Road, Brookfield, CT 06804.

SFR: What are your interests and hobbies outside of SF?

WHELAN: I love music, all kinds except country and Western.

SFR: It seems that a lot of artists like to work with music in the background.

WHELAN: Sometimes I work with no music. I have a thing about "fasting from sound". Sometimes you regain your appreciation by getting some fresh air. If I have it going constantly for weeks or days on end, I get jaded, tired of what I'm hearing. It's like being a gourmet. You can't eat all the time and expect to retain your palate. I like electronic music and musique concrete, hard rock -- as hard as you can get it --, jazz and classical. Record jackets for classical albums are something I really want to get into.

SFR: Besides album covers, what other kind of new project would you like to try?

WHELAN: I'd like to do some non-illustrative work. Not illustrating my own stories but illustrating concepts in my mind that I want to get down in visual form.

SFR: Anything further you'd like to add?

WHELAN: I also like to exercise. My life is so sedentary, I feel a need to work out an hour a day to keep in shape. I was into judo in college and I'm planning to try karate. And I'd like to learn to play the piano. I joke with Audrey about giving up art to begin a career as an electronic musician!

SFR: That would be SF's loss.

WHELAN: Not necessarily -- just a change in media, from SF art to SF music! It's not so great a leap from one to the other. For me, they both draw on the same feelings and ideas.

SFR: Thank you, Michael Whelan and Audrey Price.

THE VIVISECTOR

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

BLACK EASTER/THE DAY AFTER JUDGMENT
By James Blish
Gregg Press, 1980, 331 pp., \$16.95.
Introduction by D.G. Hartwell

To conclude, for a little while at least, the discussion of supernatural horror novels in this column, here we have one (the two titles make up one work, but are published here as a single book for the first time) which has absolutely nothing to do with the Lovecraftian or Post-Lovecraftian tradition and harkens back to Algernon Blackwood's remarks about "spiritual terror". **BLACK EASTER/THE DAY AFTER JUDGMENT** is closer to C.S. Lewis or Charles Williams than to, say, Stephen King or Peter Straub. Not only is it concerned with spiritual terror, it contains little else. Most of the traditional story values are neglected. In the introduction, Hartwell mentions that **BLACK EASTER** did very badly in paperback, the publisher's attempt to market it for the **ROSEMARY'S BABY** audience having failed. **THE DAY AFTER JUDGMENT** never had a paperback, as far as I know, and the hardcover is an extreme rarity. The only copy I ever saw was going for, I think, \$65.00. Until this Gregg Press printing, one could only read it in the butchered **GALAXY** printing. I remember Blish writing at the time (in **SFR**, I think) that even he didn't know what was going on in places in the magazine version.

It doesn't surprise me that **BLACK EASTER** didn't appeal to the people who liked **ROSEMARY'S BABY**. The popular supernatural novel audience wants a complicated, paranoid plotline, characters they can clearly identify with and understand, and lots of emotion. **BLACK EASTER** presents a description of an event, full of surprises, but with so little interaction between the characters I'm not sure I'd call it a plot. All the characters are bizarre, virtually all of them repellent, and the work as a whole is extremely dispassionate. It is an exercise in theme. It was Blish, after all, the author of the statement (now used on **ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE** rejection slips) that a story "must have content; it must be about something".

Unquestionably this book is about something. But its content is theological, which is enough to send most readers heading for the hills, save for Jerry Falwell and a few

fundamentalists who would either insist that it's all true, or prove too unsophisticated to read literature at all. (Actually, I think it would prove too Catholic for them.)

The premise is handled in a straight "what if" fashion dear to the hearts of engineering SF writers, only that premise is: What if all the devils, or even a lot of them, were let out of Hell for a single night to do whatever they pleased? With this proposition, an arms manu-

facturer confronts the magician/protagonist Theron Ware (as much as anybody is the protagonist; for the most part, things just happen, and the characters watch), expense being no object. Baines, the warmonger, isn't able to get enough aesthetic satisfaction out of destruction any more. He craves something really original. Ware is after ultimate knowledge. Between them, they bring about Armageddon, and the Earth becomes congruent with Upper Hell, right out of Dante. The City of Dis



risers (where else?) in Death Valley, and the remnants of the Strategic Air Command takes a whack at it, in what proves to be the last gasp of secular power.

The odd thing, the thing which doubtless brought about the commercial failure of the book, is that all this evokes very little emotion from the characters. Baines doesn't feel any particular exaltation. It is entirely plausible, though that the event should be too large for any emotion to encompass, leaving him merely drained, just as it is plausible that Ware should have given up any feelings he might have once had about the time he entered this line of work. Likewise that Baines's associates are a bunch of brainy automatons. I am not saying that this is a failing of the book, though I think that the character of the white magician, Father Domenico, might have been played up more for contrast. The effect is that the reader's attention is turned almost entirely to the theological implications of the event. An occult believer I know described BLACK EASTER as the most terrifying thing she'd ever read. One of the most effective moments comes when Father Domenico realises that a demon has been elected Pope, and the anti-Christ has arrived at last. But if this sort of thing doesn't mean anything to you, neither will the book. You can't read it for the melodrama, because there isn't any. The only other attraction is the description: Blish was a wonderfully vivid writer. There are many vivid scenes. The reason that this work will never be popular is that it has little to offer to most people. It is an intellectual, theological clockwork about the overthrow of God.

For fans, there are some in-jokes. Despite a preface in which Blish claims that this book is quite unlike any other black magic novel, the others being either romantic or playful, a definite playful element is present. All the white magicians are tuckerised science fiction writers:

"... Father Boucher, who has commerce with some intellect of the recent past that was neither mortal nor a Power ... Father Vance, in whose mind floated visions of magics that would not be comprehensible, let alone practicable, for millions of years to come; Father Anson, a brusque engineer type who specialised in unclouding the minds of politicians; Father Selahny, a terrifying kabbalist who spoke in parables of whom it was said that no one since Leviathan had understood his

counsel ... Father Atheling, a wall-eyed grimoirian who saw portents in parts of speech and lectured everyone in a tense nasal voice until the Director had to exile him to the library except when business was being conducted"

-- (EASTER, page 127-28)

Actually, for all Atheling, Blish's critical alter-ego appears in the book, I get the impression that the author identified with Theron Ware. The physical description of Ware resembles Blish late in life. There seems to be a certain sympathy for Ware's quest for knowledge regardless of the consequences, the quest being the very crux of the trilogy, AFTER SUCH KNOWLEDGE (the other two volumes are DOCTOR MIRABILIS and A CASE OF CONSCIENCE) which make up the core of Blish's work. But of course, it is never a good idea to assume the author is one of his characters.

You may well want to read this. It is interesting, vivid and unique. But know what you're getting into. It is not like all the other witchcraft and black magic novels on the market.

The Gregg Press edition is a facsimile of the two Doubleday first editions, following their pagination (which is why I specify which page 127-28, above). It is the best edition to have, sturdy, on good paper and also a lot easier to come by than the originals.

PROTEUS: VOICES FOR THE EIGHTIES

Edited by Richard McEnroe
Ace, 1981, 274 pages, \$2.50.

If this is what voices for the eighties are like, well, I've got a lot of magazines from the sixties I haven't read yet

Really, I try to avoid writing bad reviews. To write a bad review you have to at least try to read a bad book, and I have better things to do with my time. Besides, there are so many books being published these days that the best thing for a reviewer to do is point out the ones that are worth getting. I try, folks. Really I do. At the same time, I don't feel like reading six books for every one I review, or however many it takes.

I selected PROTEUS from the piles of things that come in for review because it looked interesting. I had reasonably high expectations for it. I have been disappointed.

Very well, to be positive, there is one terrific George Alec Effinger story called (appropriately enough) "Terrific Park". It does not stand out merely as the best in a bad book. It's the first one in the book so I read it first. It merely stands out. It's about two astronauts sent out on a strange journey:

"It had been almost two weeks since they left the star behind. They were traveling toward nothing. That was their purpose. Nothing. They were supposed to investigate nothing. They were very excited, a little afraid, very curious. Nothing has always had that effect on a man."

-- (Page 2)

Instead of nothing, they find:

"... a water world at the very end of the universe ... By a remarkable coincidence, the inhabitants speak English and have built their civilization in an amazing copy of Route 1 in New Jersey."

-- (Page 9)

Most of the planet consists of an amusement park. One astronaut remains convinced that it is an evil alien illusion or that they are dead or going mad, while the other one just accepts things, goes on the rides, finally opens his helmet for some cotton candy, and so on. Effinger keeps up his underplayed, deadpan style for a considerable length. The story works and builds up its own lunatic sense of reality, precisely because he does not let it slip into farce.

There's not much else I can say for the book though. There are ac-



ceptable, but minor pieces by Michael Swanwick, Andrew Weiner, Nicholas Eremakov and Eileen Gunn. Most of the other stories range from dull to outrageously bad. "Games Children Play" by Jack Haldeman isn't really a story at all, just a synoptic outline of an idea. It's a good one. He could probably sell the result to TWILIGHT ZONE if he actually sat down and wrote the story. Charles Sheffield's "Parasites Lost" does not show such promise. There is an insane premise (a lunar truffle hog--no kidding!) which rapidly becomes an unrationallised prop. in a weak capture-and-escape comedy. Craig Strete is intensely, militantly unreadable. Reginald Bretton forces knock-kneed satire and is nearly so. "The Road to the Sea" by Takashi Ishikawa proves that the hoariest American slushpile clichés have not only reached Japan, but are coming back. This is the one in which you find out in the last line -- gasp! -- that the planet is Mars! -- at which point the hero expires. ((A quick aside to would-be writers. Write visually. Allow the reader to be there, to see what is going on, to take in the landscape. If it is necessary to blindfold the reader in order to spring a "surprise" and this "surprise" is the only point there is, then you haven't got a story.)) And so on. Robert Chilson has a story about a totally bland fellow whose wife is jealous because he got an android lover. Had there been any characterization worth mentioning, this could have been a powerful story. As is, I couldn't understand what she saw in him, nor did I much care.

PROTEUS is allegedly a collection of out-takes from DESTINIES, stories which didn't fit in as the series developed. I wonder if they really aren't stories the editors had second thoughts about. With a few exceptions, DESTINIES is better off without them.

But to end on a positive note, with few exceptions, the writers have all done much better elsewhere. It's probably a sign of an over-expanded market that they can sell work which is much less than their best, and at good rates, too.

STARSHIP & HAIKU
By Sontom Sucharitkul
Pocket Books/Timescape, 1981
197 pp., \$2.50

It's a common complaint that from science fiction one gets the impression that the future only happens to Americans. I don't think this is cultural chauvinism, really, just honesty on the part of the writ-

ers. Few Americans, including few American science fiction writers, have traveled widely enough to know much about other cultures, especially non-European ones. Therefore, rather than fake things endlessly, they write what they know. Since, quite probably, the majority of science fiction writers in the world are Americans, we don't see as much of an international future as we'd like.

How refreshing to find someone with a more cosmopolitan viewpoint. Sucharitkul is a westernized Thai, the son of a diplomat. He has resided in several countries and visited several more. He speaks several languages, has attended Asian music conferences (he is an avant-garde composer), appeared on Japanese TV, and once he fell into a septic tank in Bangkok, whereupon he discovered the meaning of life and his stories started selling. Not being a superstitious soul, he dismissed this as a coincidence. More seriously, he has mentioned that he tends to take Buddhism a little more seriously these days, now that many of its tenets have been confirmed by modern physics.

It isn't surprising then that his science fiction would come out quite differently from most. The pleasant surprise for people who are new to his work is that he can really write. I don't have to point out that he's one of the few people doing innovative work in science fiction these days. Gene Wolfe did in a recent AMAZING.

STARSHIP & HAIKU is about a Japanese future, or more specifically, a Japanese Ending. World War III has occurred. The world is ruined, and poison will shortly wipe out all human life. In Japan, which has been relatively untouched, and where some vestige of government survives, there is a great revival of the traditional culture, completely with a very heavy emphasis on traditional suicide rituals. To make life (and death) interesting, at this crucial moment the whales reveal that not only are they sentient, but they created the Japanese in a genetic experiment long ago. The resultant guilt causes an even greater wave of suicides.

The book is very largely about death as a thing of beauty and life as a work of art which requires a proper ending. (The last line of a Haiku, we are told, reveals all its meaning.) It is the design of a slightly mad minister of Japan, who sets himself up as Lord of Death, to make sure that all human life has a suitably artistic ending.

Of course if all the characters

did was kill themselves, there would not be much of a story. Fear not, there is conflict, and a resolution which goes beyond the desire for a beautiful death into survival and transcendence. The transcendence, as far as these things go, is very well handled, but it is always a problem when the author is dealing with something beyond human experience, which cannot wholly be expressed in words (though he does surprisingly well with the utterly non-human whalespeech), and of course he has to fake it. If Sucharitkul really had achieved such understanding, perhaps out of compassion he might stick around for a while and help the rest of us into nirvana, but somehow I don't think he'd be doing it through science fiction. (This is why all writers have to be evasive about the Secret of the Ages, ways to prevent war and achieve social tranquility, radical scientific breakthroughs, etc. If they really had any of these things, they'd be off transforming the world, not writing science fiction.)

The prologue probably sums up the whole book, and all of Sucharitkul's work so far. It's a gracefully written, solemn sequence in which an old abbot leads several of the principle characters to the top of a pagoda. At the top of this sacred edifice is a diving board, its paint chipping, stretching out over a now-drained lake. After speaking for a last time to his students and making a few prophecies, the old man, with complete calm, dives into the mud below. The whole scene fits, especially the diving board. The essence of Sucharitkul's writing is that tacky, flashy modern and traditional viewpoints are intertwined. Images are mixed. The reader is carried through absurdity into beauty and meaning.

Other things I like and a few I don't: Haiku is inserted in strategic places, contributing far more to the overall structure of the book than quoted poetry usually does. At the beginning, as the curtain rises on a devastated world trying to go about its business, we get:

"Look! Skeletons,
in their best holiday clothes,
viewing flowers."

--Onitsura (1661-1738)

There is a singularly effective and eerie scene when a woman is impregnated by a whale. This could have been ridiculous in the hands of another writer.

There are also a couple of confusing scenes, especially one early on, at the start of the Millenial War, involving the moon breaking apart, a volcano erupting, and lots of con-

fusion, seen through the eyes of a child. I didn't have any more idea what was going on than the child did. And I do not think that a broken moon would look like jagged pieces of a plate. More likely it would come together again under its own gravity (for a body that size, the structural strength of the material is irrelevant), and if it didn't, the pieces would have to be very small. Most likely they would appear as points of light, and they would not illuminate much. But things are always happening by the light of the moon fragments.

With this novel, I think Sucharitkul has reached the point many writers never pass beyond. He is where Zelazny and Delany were about 1967. His work is colorful, charming, unusual, far better crafted than the vast majority of science fiction. It borders on having real depth, but doesn't quite have it yet. At this point an author can either 1) go on to greatness 2) wreck himself completely 3) level off. Alas, that most do either two or three. But we can hope. As long as relatively new writers can produce work this good, there is hope for the field.

THE REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

20TH CENTURY AMERICAN SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS

Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 8, Gale Research, 1981. XXVI Plus 652 pages in two volumes. \$124.00

Edited by David Cowart and Thomas L. Wymer

ALEXANDER, WALTON, MORRIS

A Primary and Secondary Bibliography by Kenneth J. Zahorski and Robert H. Boyer. G.K. Hall & Co., 1981, 291 pp. \$23.00.

CONTEMPORARY LITERARY CRITICISM VOLUME 18.

Edited by Sharon Gunton. Gale Research, 1981, X plus 566 pp. \$62.00

I doubt many individuals are going to buy any of these, except perhaps the ALEXANDER, ETC. volume, but a library should have all three. 20TH CENTURY SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS is a really massive effort, not merely a "who's who", but an important work of criticism. The essays on the individual authors are not merely factual entries, but sometimes major studies at considerable length. I didn't count, but I wouldn't be surprised if a couple ran 20,000 words. Certainly a college at which a science fiction course is taught



must have this work permanently on reserve. The quality of the entries is almost uniformly high. Those on Heinlein and Le Guin strike me as particularly insightful. There are few errors, though a few do creep in. Several of the writers, academicians and not fans, are not used to novels which have ten year gaps between magazine and book publication. They tend to assume the book publication dates are the dates of composition. The author of the de Camp entry is clearly unaware that GENUS HOMO is de Camp's first novel.

Somebody without adequate access to the old prozines thinks that Gernsback wrote no fiction besides RALPH 124C41PLUS and the Baron Munchausen adventures. Wrong. He did others, all of them unreprinted, all of them awful.

There are also trivial factual errors, particularly in the appendices. (e.g. There were 4 Moskowitz WEIRD TALES issues, not three.) The only person to really shoot herself in the foot is Elisa Kay Sparks who, in the appendix on the New Wave, tells us that "When Moorcock took over NEW WORLDS, Ballard had already published his first two eerie disaster stories, "Escapement" and "Prima Belladonna". Well, I haven't read "Escapement" but "Prima Belladonna" isn't my idea of an "eerie disaster story", and furthermore, Sparks had not done the most elementary research. With the help of the M.I.T. Index and L.W. Currey's first editions bibliography, I have determined that before the Moorcock takeover of NEW WORLDS, Ballard had published forty-eight stories, not to mention four collections and two novels. In fact, Ballard had already written most of

the work for which he is now remembered prior to the Moorcock editorship. The New Wave appendix is the weakest, liberally sprinkled with simplistic generalizations.

The others cover "science fiction", fandom and conventions and other subjects. Nils Hardin's history of fazines is extremely good.

The ALEXANDER, WALTON AND MORRIS bibliography links these three writers together via their use of Celtic myths. The Morris in question is Kenneth Morris, not the better known William. Kenneth Morris was an extremely talented fantasy writer who never made it out of obscurity. Most of his stories were published in Theosophical publications. His books were widely-spaced and the last (of three) was published as a juvenile. Since 1930 or so he has been relegated to the status of a rumor, someone known only to the most advanced collectors. Most people heard of him for the first time when Le Guin praised his work in "From Elfland to Poughkeepsie", but that didn't do much good, at least right away, because of the slower unavailability of his work. I had heard of him before the Le Guin essay, actually, but it took me ten years to find anything by him. This was his sole collection, THE SECRET MOUNTAIN. It had been sitting in an SF specialty shop for some time. No one else, including the proprietor, had any idea what it was.

The point is that until very recently Morris couldn't even qualify as a neglected writer. That implies that people could read him if they wanted to. Recently, however, his other two books, THE FATES OF THE PRINCES OF DYED and BOOK OF THREE DRAGONS have been reprinted (Newcastle and Arno, respectively) and a couple of his stories have been anthologized, so it is now possible for his work to be given some consideration. The lengthy introduction to the Morris section in the Zahorski/Boyer book is a revelation, embodying much original research. It probably constitutes 95% of all that is available on the author.

There isn't much available on Evangeline Walton either, aside from Lin Carter's introductions to her books. Zahorski and Boyer go beyond those to produce a picture of a woman who must possess limitless optimism, to labor in obscurity for so long before becoming an "overnight" success after some forty years of trying.

Lloyd Alexander has fared considerably better. You can tell by the way the list of material about him is so much longer. But the revelation here is how much work he has done besides his famous fantasies.

If you are interested in any of these three writers, you must consult this book often at the very least, if you can get by without owning it.

CONTEMPORARY LITERARY CRITICISM is an ongoing, standard feature in library reference sections. It consists of excerpts from reviews and articles, giving one an overall view of what has been written about a given author and what the general critical opinion is. Since science fiction has gotten more respectable of late, science fiction writers have begun to be included, and some of the quotes are from science fiction sources. Volume 18 has sections on Richard Adams, Arthur Clarke, Vonda McIntyre and Frederick Pohl. Also some tangential figures like Thomas Pynchon and John Gardner. (In the Gardner entry I was interested to note that FREDDY'S BOOK was not as well received by the mainstream critics as Gardner's non-fantasy novels and the most favorable review was by Ursula Le Guin.) This is very much a book to be paged through at the library or consulted in the course of research projects. I remember that when I was in graduate school, we were taught extremely elaborate ways of finding references and looking things up. In reality what we did was wander into the reference section and just look around. We always gravitated to CONTEMPORARY LITERARY CRITICISM and 20TH CENTURY LITERARY CRITICISM (a companion series from the same company -- there's an extensive section on Lovecraft in Volume 4) before long.

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AND THEN I SAW....

BY THE EDITOR

CONDORMAN (PG)

is a tongue-in-cheek Disney superhero/James Bond spy/CIA effort.

The comicbook artist creator of Condorman is recruited by a CIA pal for a minor secret papers exchange in Istanbul. He falls for the lovely female Russian agent.

Later, the agent seeks to defect and "Condorman" is recruited to help her escape. He insists on a trick, multi-purpose vehicle....

And so on. It moves fast, inspires chuckles, is totally incredible and leaves you with the feeling of having been cheated and insulted.

The bad guys all wear black uniforms, drive black cars, black speedboats... They all are killed in fiery explosions and crashes by the innocent-of-sex hero.

Disney still adheres to the basic Christian ethic--kill thy enemy but don't fuck thy loved one. A great message for the kids.

THE ARISTOCATS (G)

is a minor Disney feature cartoon. A venal butler tries to get rid of his rich employer's pet cats because they will inherit the family fortune before him.

A worldwide tomcat helps the momma cat and three kittens. Also helping are a musical group of street cats and a mouse friend, the mistresses horse...a pair or three of geese....

Funny, sentimental, sanitary, uninspired.

TARZAN, THE APE MAN (R)

is:

ludicrous;
inept;
boring;
implausible;
insulting;
the worst movie of the year.

Bo Derek's fab body and proud beauties are overexposed [now that we've seen them and seen them and seen them], the curiosity is gone and their commercial value has declined. Bo Derek, alas, has an acting range (on a scale of 10) of from 0 to 1.

The Tarzan this time, Miles O' Keefe, has a great muscle-builder body [and no lines to speak] which

must require hours of work every day to maintain.

Richard Harris, trapped (but with a good salary, I hope) in this atrocity, with incredible lines and a farcical character, did his best (but that long dying scene with an elephant tusk through his belly!) and was a good professional to the end.

John Derek, director and photographer, Bo's husband and egotist, shows he couldn't think beyond her breasts and the lowest commercial values.

This film is supposed to be a starring vehicle for Bo. Alas, it's a lemon with square wheels.

HEAVY METAL (R)

is an "adult" animated full-length feature which strings five or so episodes/stories on the framework of an infinitely evil force showing a girl instances of how humankind cannot resist it and how it will destroy Good everywhere.

The sex content is juvenile, the violence and action content sophomoric and "macho", and the naked, huge-breasted women incredible.

HEAVY METAL is a comicbook on film.

Nevertheless it has some fine scenes, enchanting, fascinating backgrounds and landscapes, and compelling monsters and characters.

It is, at least, never boring. [Half the audience was under 16 years--mostly children--and were brought by their parents. I sat bemused at the messages and lessons

that were being implanted in their minds from this double feature (Tarzan was the other film).]

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK (R)

is less of a film than it could have been. The Mike McQuay novelization is superior.

We are confronted with some mis-casting: Kurt Russell (whispering and speaking softly to give reason for his character's name, "Snake" Plissken) even with long hair, a beard and a black eyepatch is still obviously acting tough as a legendary criminal of this 1997 U.S.A.

Ernest Borgnine is wasted as the cabdriver in the vast prison created from Manhattan island in New York. He and Donald Pleasance (as the captured President) could have exchanged roles to very good effect.

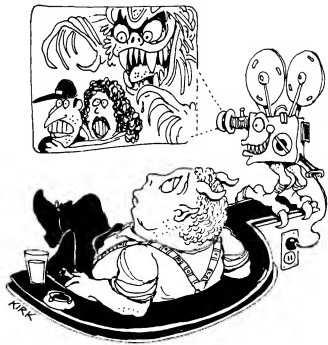
The lingering Nerve gas in the world's air, from a recent war with the Soviets, is not mentioned in the movie though it was a factor in the novel.

The film has many nice, effective prison culture touches and special effects, but suffers from being too tightly bound to a pulp plot and breakneck pacing.

Still, it is a gripping picture and worth seeing.

ENDLESS LOVE (R)

is endlessly boring for anyone over forty. This is a 'vehicle' for the advancement of Brooke Shields' career and in many



close-ups of her beautiful cover-girl face and body, seems more a two-hour advertising brochure aimed at top-paying advertising agencies.

She isn't required to do much acting in this. [I'd say she hasn't done any acting worthy of the name since PRETTY BABY.]

The story: two teenagers are desperately in love. Their permissive parents let them begin and continue to sleep together.

They are forced apart for a month by her father "The girl is only fifteen years old!" and the boy is driven mad to see her again--and in his desperation and anger and jealousy tries to fake a house fire and get back in the family's good graces by warning them of the danger.

Alas, the fire gets out of control and the house burns down.

He is sent to a state mental hospital... Released on probation two years later he searches her out in another state...

The girl sees that they must part forever...

At the end he is dragged away to serve long years in prison and the older viewer is left bemused by the terrible power of emotion and blood chemistry.

It's been said what a shame that youth is wasted on the young. This movie proves another observation: what a shame experience and perspective can only be utilized by the old.

If you're a teenager or very young adult this film will be of interest.

By the way, Shirley Knight, playing Brooke Shields' mother, steals the movie.

BLOW OUT (R)

is a fairly good destroy-the-evidence-and-kill-the-witness-to-murder movie, with the victim a presidential candidate (with a high-level conspiracy behind the deed), with John Travolta as a movie soundman who inadvertently records the rifle shot that blows a car tire which leads to a plunge off a bridge to a lake, and with Nancy Allen as the lovely girl set up with the candidate to be with him when the accident is reported and media-covered.

The tire blow out was not intended to result in the death of the candidate.

Travolta dives and saves Allen, cannot save the candidate.

The merciless single agent who was hired to set up the candidate is cut loose by the terrified high-level conspirators, and decides to save the situation by destroying

evidence--and the girl.

The film was written and directed by Brian De Palma, who again manages to insert a girl-in-shower-menaced-by-intruder-with-butcherknife in his movie, but with tongue in cheek--self parody.

Travolta is adequate. There is something in his character/personality which gives off a hint of wimp, of weakness, of little-boy in a grown-up world. He's not a really good actor, and will probably be forced to a variation of SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER or GREASE to salvage his career.

On the other hand, Nancy Allen is quietly excellent as the sales girl who does little sex business set-ups on the side. Not too bright, strangely innocent and gullible, she really acts: unless you know better you would believe she really is kinda dumb and too-trusting.

At its core this is another kill-the-girls film, and the ending will turn you off.

ST. HELENS (R)

is only watchable for Art Carney's personification of old, crotchety, no-shit Harry Truman, the reclusive individualist who lived in his lodge on Spirit Lake in the shadow of the mountain.

The rest is cliché: the black helicopter pilot who has racists attacking him; the greedy lumber baron, the lovely, divorced (with son) waitress who falls in love with---; the sincere Geologist who warns locals that the mountain is going to explode.

The acting (except for Carney) is adequate to amateur and the script is clumsy and unable to give any depth or believability to the quasi-documentary approach---as endless shots of small landslides, nervous animals, and preliminary belches are intercut every few minutes.

Finally the huge eruption takes place---and you've seen it on TV before. The same footage.

ST. HELENS is a cheap, exploitive, badly-done movie. Don't bother with it. Don't watch it on TV, either; they'll have to excise Truman's pungent language, which is all that makes the film memorable. Cable TV, now...you might want to waste two hours in that uncut viewing option.

FINAL COUNTDOWN (PG)

toys with basic time-travel paradoxes as a modern U.S. aircraft carrier---the Nimitz---is sent back to 1941 when the Japanese are about to attack Pearl Harbor.

To interfere or not to interfere? With the 1980 armaments, planes, computers, etc. the Nimitz could wipe up the entire Japanese fleet...and change history.

The makers of the film chickened out and sent the Nimitz back to 1980 just in time. History is saved! A few loose ends are neatly tucked into place.

Kirk Douglas, Martin Sheen, James Farentino and Charles Durning did their best and make the movie watchable.

The Nimitz and its aircraft seem to be on marvelous display.

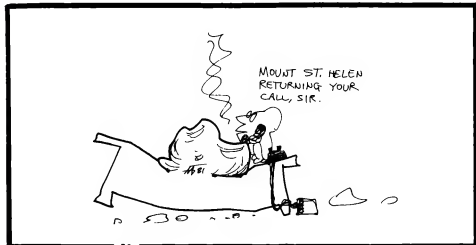
The time storm is never explained.

THE WOLFEN (R)

is an eerie, mystical, high-tensioned, expertly crafted horror film.

The gore is swift, explicit and shocking. The terror and suspense are knife-edged.

The visuals and special effects are exceptionally good, especially the camera point-of-view from the



creatures who are stalking, killing and often eating their victims. The Wolfen see in broader bands of light than we, and hear more of the sound spectrum. The images and sounds are a very effective way to let the audience see and hear as an "alien".

The script is marvelous: terror and suspense and dread and anticipation mingled with morgue humor and fine characterization.

Albert Finney as an unconventional detective on New York's police force is very good.

See this film if possible. It will probably be gutted (edited) for network TV. Remember it when it is scheduled for cable release.

COMIN' AT YA! (R)

is little more than a violent, illogical, kill-and-abuse-the-women Western which was written to demonstrate the 3-D gimmick which is this film's only selling point.

The plot follows the old hack dictum: never kill a man when you have the chance. The hero and the villains perversely delay, or cut loose their enemy, in order to keep him alive for later fights and killing.

The gang which has taken by force a score of young women for sale to Mexico brothels inexplicably stakes them out to die in the desert heat.

Tony Anthony plays the revenge-minded hero. He looks like a bank clerk.

The 3-D effect is occasionally vivid and startling as when hands slowly reach out into the theatre and seem about to grip your throat; when spears hurtle out at you; when various items fall "down" into the audience... But too often the effect is out of focus and eye-hurtful. The polarized paper & plastic glasses required to see the 3-D effect make the film darker than normal.

Bad taste abounds--as when a naked infant is dangled forward to allow a crotch shot...and when a baddie is shotgunned upward between his spread legs--another kind of crotch shot.

Brief nudity, lotsa contrived, pointless violence. The film is an insult to intelligence.

STUDENT BODIES (R)

is a send-up of all the recent horror movies--with a Heavy Breather stalking teen-age couples in and around a small town high school; he strikes when they sneak off to have sex. All the

kids succumb easily and almost bloodlessly.

No full frontal nudity, an occasional swear word to gain the coveted R-rating.

The film has a few good satirical, funny moments, but mostly it's a low-budget drag. An actor named The Stick steals the movie: he's extraordinarily tall and skeletal, with astonishingly long arms. He looks like a human praying mantis.

Pass on this one.

FRIDAY THE 13TH (R) FRIDAY THE 13TH, PART II (R)

What I find most disturbing about these grisly "body count" horror movies is the killing of attractive, nice, healthy young men and women--people who don't deserve to die.

Granted, that makes the horror more telling and effective, makes the suspense and shock more intense, but it undermines the basic illusions of life that make morality and ethics work.

We are brought up to believe in justice and virtue, that crime does not pay, and that being good and obeying laws does pay!

These psychotic-on-the-loose films teach the young audience that justice, ethics and retribution, that being good...all those are lies...and that capricious fate--death--at the hands of a crazie [or blind, uncontrollable forces] is liable to strike anyone at any time for no reason at all.

The message is that we are not in control of our fate and that it is pointless to plan, to act morally, to do anything of consequence because death can and does strike without regard for virtue and morality: the saint, the virgin and the depraved all are equally vulnerable.

In each of these films the survivor is a young woman who has the guts and courage to fight back and eventually kill the killer. Her reward is eventual death by a sequel--crazie, or insanity.

On another level the message is: Don't leave the group to have sex; Don't disobey the law; Don't ever go out into the dark alone; Don't trust strangers; Don't get anywhere near a retarded person or anyone different.

These are all good lessons, of course, to one degree or another, but they undermine social cohesion and individuality.

I tend to think these massacre films and their implied philosophy of despair are a reflection of the increasing perception that God is dead, virtue is pointless, and gov-

ernment cannot deliver as it has promised, and instead lies and cheats and betrays its citizens.

What are the thoughts and feelings of the teenagers and young adults who make up the audiences for these horror films--as they see themselves murdered in horrible realism?

As an aside: Paulette and I find ourselves usually the only people in the audiences who are over 30 and who are not wearing jeans. I expect sometime we will be attacked for being Old, Out-of-Place, and Out of Uniform.

CANNONBALL RUN (R)

is a no-holds-barred cross-country, illegal, for-the-fun-&-hell-of-it car race (with a motorcycle & pal for variety).

It is Burt Reynolds and actor friends having a tongue-in-cheek romp through the cliches. It's fun, fast-moving, diverting if you don't expect too much. Who wins the race doesn't matter--no one takes it seriously enough--and the fun is in the racing, mild dirty tricks, and subterfuges.

Jack Elam as a needle-happy protologist almost steals the movie. His mugging is marvelous.

Farrar Fawcett is Burt's tag-along girl friend in this one, and is more natural and attractive in casual clothes and loose morals than as an Angel. Maybe it was Burt's easy-going humor and the camaraderie of the sets and actors. As she ages she is acquiring a used look, and a subtle experienced woman air. It may suit her better and be her niche in Hollywood for a few years.

Burt Reynolds films succeed or fail depending on the character he plays: in SMOKEY & THE BANDIT II and in CANNONBALL RUN he plays a rather mean, cruel, domineering bastard (with humor and later softening). In HOOPER, in SMOKEY & THE BANDIT and in STARTING OVER he is more warm, sympathetic, considerate. The END was about death, and while funny, and while he was a sympathetic character, the theme killed the commercial success of the film.



CADDIE (PG)

is another fine Australian film. They do period/historical movies marvelously well. The photography is superb.

This is about a young woman's struggle after separation and divorce in Australia in the late 1920s and 1930s as she manages to care for her two children and herself, as she becomes street-wise, life-wise, experienced and toughened. She loves, avoids, accepts, and survives.

This film utterly convinces with its period authenticity. The acting is top-notch.

THE GETTING OF WISDOM (PG)

enhances the Australian film industry's reputation for great period movies and fine photography.

This is about a young girl's 3-4 year attendance at a girls' school; she is from a poor family in the outback, and the girls from more wealthy families are terrible snobs. There is humor, sadness, even adolescent tragedy...a hint of lesbian love...discoveries of self and talents, of intelligence and stupidity.

The headmistress is as cold and proper as can be conceived. The period is around 1900, and the authenticity is so good you believe everything. Thank God the Australians don't tear down houses and buildings after thirty or forty years of use, as we too often do. Their stock of old cars, buggies, clothes, decorations, furniture, streets must be enormous.

The young actresses in this were all very, very good.

CLASH OF TITANS (PG)

is a preposterous tale of the mythical Greek gods of Mt. Olympus wrangling among themselves and manipulating helpless mortals for trivial ego/pride reasons.

Even so, the stars who play the gods and the lesser-known who play the mortals all play it straight and create an illusion of reality in the film--except that the old-fashioned, awkward, clumsy clay-models stop-motion animation technique used to make Pegasus and the man-goat and other creatures destroys that illusion. The mechanical owl who chirps and buzzes is so much a copy/ripoff of R2D2 [STAR WARS] that it makes me ill.

DRAGONSLAYER (PG)

is eons ahead of BLACK HOLE in quality and plot, and



a surprise: who would have thought the Disney studios would ever create such a realistic, honest, quality sword and sorcery film as this? With a touch of nudity as well, and considerable realistic death, too.

The story of the old sorcerer unable to assuage the killing of a dragon and forcing his untutored young apprentice to accept the task is solid and predictable. Not predictable is the switch/surprise ending and the ironic/cynical last few scenes.

The dragon is impressive! The realism of humble medieval/dark ages life is convincing. The magic and sorcery is both humorous and believable.

The ritual virgin-sacrifice-to-a-monster story element [also present in CLASH OF TITANS] speaks to something basic/instinctual/collectively unconscious in men (if not in women). I'm not sure of its significance.

Altogether, DRAGONSLAYER is a very fine movie: action adventure, realism, believability, food-for-thought.

Is Walt Disney spinning in his grave?

ARTHUR (PG)

is the classic story of a poor little rich drunk who is being pressured by his family to marry a sweet, loving, beautiful young woman or else lose his \$750 million trust fund.

Then he meets this lower class New York waitress (studying to be an actress) and falls for her, and she him.

Arthur (the funny drunk) is looked-after, coddled, scolded, and bottled by his long-time manservant Dobson (something like that) who is very British, very proper, and very much caring.

This sort of picture was popular in the Thirties, and the re-emergence of the form may tell us something about our times' social and economic situation.

The film is funny and absurd, enjoyable as social fantasy--with its bare-bones formula showing---because of a good script and the talent of Dudley Moore as Arthur, Liza Minnelli as the waitress, and above all John Gielgud as the manservant.

Gielgud steals the movie, of course. Dudley Moore is at times



a repulsive drunk, and Liza Minnelli is wasted (no singing or dancing) and rather abrasive. (Why is Arthur so taken with her? She's too large and too New York brassy.)

Too many of the funny lines were thrown away and obscured by audience laughter. This would be a good movie to see on cable with the sound turned up an extra notch.

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON (R) is three kinds of film all mixed into one: An affectionate satire of the old horror film genre, a genuine horror film in its own right, and a grotesque comedy.

Somehow, it all works.

The grisly special effects, the harrowing transformation from man to werewolf, the savage werewolf in action...these are especially realistic and superbly done. They give the movie its horror and actually a strong element of its macabre humor.

One of the two young American men on a hiking vacation in northern England [The moors, stay off the moors!] is savaged and killed by a werewolf before the werewolf is shot by locals. The surviving American--wounded--is taken to London to recover. There, in hospital, he is visited by the undead soul of his companion, in the form of the face-shredded, throat-torn body he possessed after the attack. He urges the survivor to commit suicide "to kill the werewolf headline." Else the surviving young American will in turn become a ravaging, killing werewolf come the next full moon.

As events progress, this hallucinated cadaver deteriorates to a disgusting, rotted corpse, always urging suicide. The conversations are matter-of-fact and friendly. It's just that until the American werewolf is dead his dead friend and the American werewolf's fresh victims' souls cannot leave this plane of existence and go on to better after-death lives...or deaths.

Inevitably the time-honored solution/ending takes place---in and about a porn-show theatre---and the problem is solved.

If you feel the remarkably realistic special effects were undercut and in effect wasted by tongue-in-cheek scenes before-during-after, and that the humor was riven by stark horror and grue---you're right. It is as if the producers and director didn't have the guts to use the utterly realistic gore effects and werewolf transformation in a straight story, as if they quailed and shrank from trying to make a movie as really terrifying as ALIEN.

The film is good for what it does, but I wish the makers had aimed higher.

THE FORMULA (R)

is surprisingly dull in spite of a good, stolid performance by George C. Scott, a gem of a characterization by Marlon Brando, and lots of violence.

This international intrigue film is about a secret formula used by the Nazis in WWII to make cheap gasoline from coal. The formula has been kept secret by huge multinational oil companies until it is in their interest to dust it off and use it.

Scott is the idealistic L.A. cop investigating "terrorist" murders which lead him to West Germany and a tracing of the formula's existence and present owners.

Brando plays the down-home ruthless head of a giant American oil corporation who casually has ordered the murders and who candidly admits everything to Scott in a climactic look at Real Power and elitist morality. Scott can do nothing. The picture ends with Brando making a phone call to Switzerland and making a deal which negates Scott's attempt to make the formula public. All in a day's work.

By the way, the multinational oil companies have been buying vast amounts of coal properties and coal mining companies in America, lately....

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY (R)

presents aging, suave Roger Moore in yet another 007 adventure, this time keeping a top-secret computer code from falling into Russian hands.

The movie sets a fast pace, has good-looking girls and dies of its tongue-in-cheek which slipped into its throat.

You can't believe a word of it, or a scene of it...but it's fun.

KATHY TIPPELL (R)

unflinchingly follows the teen-age heroine from man to man as she rises from an ignorant lower class Swedish provincial newly arrived in Stockholm in the late 1800s...to marriage to a prince.

The poor lived in shit, sold their daughters into prostitution when they had to, worked short, dirty, brutish lives... This film gives a look at living standards of the period---low, middle, and upper.

Kathy is lovely, and there are sufficient, well-acted, sometimes humorous scenes of nudity and sexuality.

A well-made, enlightening, slightly shocking film. It will give you perspective and make you realize how well off we are today.

PRETTY BABY (R)

has been re-released to cash in on the Brooke Shields sex-furor. But viewed objectively this Louis Malle film about the women of a good New Orleans bordello in the early 1900s---and their customers and lovers---is remarkable for the really fine acting of the then 12-year-old Shields and the authenticity of the background. Everyone involved did an excellent job. The film wears well and will last as long as movies are shown.

THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD, PART I (R)

is Mel Brook's most crude, insulting, blasphemous, dirty, and occasionally funny film to date.

He likes to show us the naked truth about ourselves while distracting us with ass-hole humor, racist humor, irreverent humor, sex humor...

Nothing is sacred to this man.

You may laugh like hell when he mocks another person's sacred cow, but then when he disembowels yours....

GAS (R)

is a non-stop idiot movie dedicated to all gas shortages everywhere and the people inhabited by them. It mixes sub-plots galore and pivots around the greed of a gasoline baron holding product off the market to drive up the price and profits.

It's a moron plot, laced with broad satire and a cynical/sad radio dj sitting above it all, observing the madness, in an all-day helicopter.

The movie has one of the longest, funniest, most extravagant and destructive multi-car chase sequences ever put on film.

There is lame-brained poetic justice at the end.

SOMEWHERE IN TIME (PG)

asks you to believe that intense self-hypnosis can send you back in time where, even though your body stays in 1981, you will possess your body in 1910, too.

All very confusing.

This Romantic tragedy of obsession and brief ecstasy---love does conquer all, damn it!---was written by Richard Matheson and betrays his recent (or recently surfaced) belief in the hereafter.

In this mess of a movie Christopher Reeve is fair, though he seems too tall and farm-handish in his out-of-fashion turn-of-the-century suit.

Jane Seymour as a 1910 stage actress is very good. And Christopher Plummer is suitably opposed to the developing romance.

You should wait for this one to be on TV or cable.

LETTERS

LETTER FROM FRITZ LEIBER

565 Geary Street, #604
San Francisco, CA 94102
July 4, 1981

'That's a very sweet, and irresistible, question you ask me: What's my secret? (of seeming to age slower than others as the years roll by. And they do roll; in my 71st now).

'That's the kind of question makes an older's day!

'But also, just generalities won't do. Which have their own way of taking all vivid and vital reality out of Statements.

'Well, my secret is perpetual adolescence. Along with, up to now, good health and a lotta luck. The same secret really as that of the girl in that wonderful short story, "Child of All Ages". But not any adolescence, and not what seems to be the current one. (Not so sure about that.) Anyway, my adolescence. A late 1920s, only child, lonely, taboo-ridden one. Some essential moods of which have stayed alive and provide my present motive power.

'Judy Merrill spotted it over a dozen years ago and laid it out in her article "Fritz Leiber", in the Special Fritz Leiber issue of THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, July, 1969. She pointed out that whereas most people around 30 or so seem to crystallize into an adult, take their own individual mature stance, I manage to back off and start through adolescence again. Sometimes, at least, by going through a serious crisis of some sort.

'Like alcoholism, from which I made my biggest and most melodramatic recovery in 1956. Though science minded in many ways, I'm a very romantic and "idealistic" person (the quotes are to indicate my distrust of and even disgust at these tendencies in me) forever living in dream worlds, surrounding myself and others with illusions (illuding is my fundamental business, oughta write an essay on it). What little I have of practical wisdom, the ability to formulate realistic plans of actions, I owe to this recovery from alcoholism and the large measure of Alcoholics Anonymous experience that went into it.

'(Point out somewhere around here that alcohol is the prime drug of the inhibited illuders.)

'Take another look at that particular adolescence of mine, only child (of actor parents, wonderful romantic images), lonely (living during school times with apartment dwelling relatives, no theater excitements), taboo and inhibition ridden (of course 90% sexual; "It's always sex", Charcot said to Freud, I think), myself seeming sophistication from the world of the theater, but inside a naive, incredibly ignorant, easily frightened kid.

'Anyhow, I fled from this adolescence by seeking out and marrying another such, my dear wife of 33 years, Jonquil Stephens, from England and London and wild witchy Wales, no less; she even had an authentic Edwardian component in her extended adolescence. We were very romantic, we rescued each other from horrid nibbling bachelorhood and spinsterhood. We pooled our ignorances and our creative resources. After a while we even achieved a pretty good sex life, but by then we were getting pretty deep into alcohol. I first and foremost. We got a son named Justin (see his article in STARSHIP, "Fritz Leiber and Eyes" for more light on my continuing adolescence; also his novel BEYOND REJECTION, where I'm the black harmonizer Francois Vase "with a taste for ancient forms of self abuse"; or his article "On Science Fiction and Philosophy" in Volume 1, No. 1, PHILOSOPHICAL SPECULATIONS IN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY, Burning Bush Publications, POB #178, Kemblesville, PA, 19347. Adv., but I wander).

'The last two paragraphs are there to say that a large part of my perpetual adolescence is a continuing romantic adolescent fascination with sex: a love-hate sort of thing, but endlessly curious. (At 70 this isn't supposed to be so easy to achieve, but I'm talking about interest rather than performance; illuding or illusioning very important here.) It really keeps me going. I think it's why Fafhrd and the Mouser developed a sex life in the 1960s and it seems to be why ("explicit sexual references") I'm having difficulty placing my new horror novel "Horrible Imaginings".

'Jonquil's death in 1969 was followed by a slower recovery from alcoholism, pulled out about November 1972, followed by living alone with lots of illuding, but lots of in-

SEXUAL ANOREXIA
IS THE ANSWER, ST.
JEROME... NOW STOP
BEATING YOUR MEAT!



fluences for realism and honesty, such as my city rooftop astronomy and the columns I'm writing for FANTASY NEWSLETTER and, less regularly, LOCUS. Bless Charlie Brown and Paul Allen.

'Some might say my secret is the old "Develop a chronic disease early in life and take care of it" the disease of course being, alcoholism, but I think unending adolescence comes closer. There! I'm about writ out, but I knew I had to do it quick, or I wouldn't get anywhere.

'Thanks for the question; I was very happy to see you at Portland; take care, have fun!

(I'm fascinated by the similarities of our adolescences---though I didn't have romantic, famous parents I was "extra baggage" with my mother as she left my father and spent a time in California (Santa Cruz) with a nice-guy new car salesman... I can still remember the long drive from Santa Cruz to Portland in a brand new 1937 Chrysler... And living in a succession of small, cheap apartments, a succession of her "boy friends"... And of course my own sexual interest-inhibited---probably explains why I later wrote so many sex novels.

((The warp and woof of my childhood, if fully traced and weighed, would probably show the genesis of the gnarled, twisted and scarred self that I am today.

((And I have a chronic disease (which surfaced ten years ago) in my arthritis and gently progressing

spinal disc degeneration. I'm happy to take care of it provided it takes care of me.

(Emotionally, though, I seem to be getting more and more cynical and pessimistic, and more Bah, Humbugish. But I'm also more tolerant and forgiving of human stupidity and flaws, probably from having demonstrated so much of those myself. The problem with tolerance is that it is often a symptom of indifference.

(These small confessions and revelations of self are fun and perhaps therapeutic, though in myself I suspect an element of exhibitionism. See? I don't trust even myself. There are never pure motives. Well... maybe murder... and lust. I suppose the stronger the emotion behind an act, the purer the motive. So---in vino veritas...and in passion there is truth?))

LETTER FROM LYNN MIMS
1511 Grand Avenue
Asbury Park, NJ 07112
August 18, 1981

I'm referring to the Orycon '80 four-way phone conversation article in Issue #40. Any conversation between Ellison, Clarke and Leiber is bound to be interesting, but I have a few bones to pick.

'Somewhere towards the last third of the transcript, (page 16), Clarke and Ellison are discussing evolution vs. special creation, and Clarke comments that special creation is "aesthetically ugly" compared to evolution. Well:

'1) How does one define aesthetics? For that matter, how is Clarke defining "evolution"? An awful lot of people seem to equate "evolution" with randomness. Our sun just happened to produce or develop with a set of planets, one planet just happened to develop the chemical and physical conditions needed to produce replicating organic compounds and over billions of years the cosmic kaleidoscope kicked out random patterns of life forms that either survived or died. If Clarke means this when he speaks of "evolution" (a contention supported by some of his fiction), he may find it aesthetically pleasing; I find it horrifying. On the other hand, there is certainly poetry in the image of the universe bursting like an enormous flower from the primal bud of the monobloc. Trite as it sounds, beauty does lie in the eye of the beholder.

'2) Perhaps I misread the comment. So, evolution is an aesthetically pleasing theory. But when did aesthetic values take precedence over

truth? Take note: I am not saying that I believe "evolution" is not a fact; I am saying that on an admittedly cursory first reading (I reread the passage more carefully) Clarke is saying, "Believe this because it's pretty". It's more effective to argue, "Believe this because the evidence supports it."

'Actually, I don't understand the conflict. G.K. Chesterton said that creationists believe God performed a miracle quickly, while evolutionists believe the miracle of existence happened slowly; but it did happen. I believe that trying to tie the Deity into any human time-frame is a fruitless task; Creation is still going on all around us.

'In a way, I found the whole section rather pathetic: in their zeal to defend the scientific spirit, Clarke and Ellison (particularly Ellison) come off sounding as stridently intolerant as any backwoods revisionists. I always thought that one of the main themes in SF was tolerance -- practical illustrations of the fact that people, human or otherwise, who don't believe exactly what you do are still worthy of respect. Lately, however, it comes as though a number of the most brilliant and talented writers in the field have adopted an attitude of, "If you believe as I do, you're an intelligent person; if you believe what I do not, you're an irrational, superstitious peasant". As a Christian who's been reading and enjoying SF for more than half my life, I find it hard to swallow.

'Clarke and Ellison are reacting to a valid fear: the fear that a wave of anti-scientific emotion could wipe out everything they've worked for. But ranting at the people one's afraid of, ("Look, you idiots, you're wrong; I'm right, but you don't have the intelligence to realize it.") isn't the way to correct the problem.

'In closing, let me say that I enjoy your publication, even though I often disagree with some of its contents. If nothing else, you make people think.

'P.S. I don't watch the Christian Television Network, so I have very little data on it or the Moral Majority. What little I've heard of Falwell reminds me disturbingly of Nehemiah Scudder in Heinlein's FUTURE HISTORY. I intend to get some firsthand information on the movement before I form a definite opinion.'

((Cheapshots are the best kind.

((Personally, I think the Creator was a Universe Mother who gave birth to this infant galaxy, and then went on to have other galaxy births....))

LETTER FROM MAUREEN PALANKER
LESHENDOK
12802 Ardennes Avenue
Rockville, MD 20851
March 16, 1981

'In Issue #37 on page 30, Martin Wooster reviews C.J. Cherryh's THE FADED SUN: KUFATH. In the course of the review, he compares Duncan to T.E. Lawrence. It is an interesting comparison, except that I suspect Mr. Wooster's instincts as a reader were better here than his conscious criticism. THE SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM is about Lawrence's assumption of another culture, his disillusionment with the role and his realization that he can no longer return comfortably to his old culture either. Duncan, of course, goes further, or makes the transition more completely. He retains some of human culture in the final crisis, but his loyalty is mri. Incidentally, Mr. Wooster claims that the SEVEN PILLARS is to



be taken "as a novel". This notion has been promulgated by the "debunking" biographies of Lawrence, most recently that of Desmond Stewart. Like many historical misstatements, it seems to be catching on through repetition. Lawrence did not work in a vacuum in World War I. Other British officers and men were with him through most of the war. When he did work alone, the results were easily shown, or were obvious. His own war diary and papers and other papers in the hands of the British government have been shown to support his version of events. When he finished the SEVEN PILLARS, he sent copies to the principal actors in the Arab Revolt (the British officers) and none of them questioned the essential accuracy of his history. The personal belief that gave events may have varied with the recollection of others, but he always said that the book was a history of himself in the war. Some of his characterizations of these men, and the Arab officers were unflattering, but that is a liberty that memoir-writers have always taken. If Mr. Wooster is interested, I would urge him to read John Mack's A PRINCE OF OUR DISORDER for a definitive psychological study and a vast and instructive collection of references, Stephen Ely Tabachnick's T.E. Lawrence for a study of Lawrence as a writer, and for a general feeling of the regard his contemporaries had for him, see A.W. Lawrence, T.E. LAWRENCE BY HIS FRIENDS.

'You needn't print that, Dick, since it's an issue late, but do at least pass it on to Mr. Wooster. I wonder, when I see how easy it is for a biographer like Stewart to write a series of bald-faced lies in fairly good prose and then to get serious critical attention for it-- I wonder what fairy tales I've swallowed as truth on other subjects about which I do not know as much.'

((Ah, there you have the lurking suspicion most of us carry far back in our heads--that we've been living by, for and in lies to various degree all our lives. And the best we can do is keep an open mind and hold nothing above question.))

LETTER FROM CHESTER TWAROG
1943 Paris Street
Aurora, CO 80010
14 June 1981

'I didn't think that there was much that could really surprise me, yet there has. Here's something new from the Denver area that may well

be the trend during the "Reagan Years". The Denver "Public" (formerly) Library will require suburban residents to pay up to \$350 per annum for borrowing books, browsing or even using reference services. This absurd proposal has the backing of the Mayor's office. The only "free" services would be inter-library loan of books and suburban branch reference services. This crassness is based on the Library Commission's reasoning that the real cost of library services is \$1.2 million a year whereas the state only gives \$510,000. So, we get to pay the balance. Who can afford to use the library services after 1 October, damn if I know. I won't. I don't think them poor, lower middle, or middle classes can, either!

"By the mid-80s, libraries across the country closed indefinitely. Illiteracy spread across the nation as the Soviets marched on Washington D.C., offering free library services to all. No one was there to stop them; they couldn't read the papers."

((There is always a side-effect which is a surprise to those who institute such fees and idiosyncrasies: in this case it wouldn't surprise me if some residents, having paid the fee, then feel justified in stealing a certain dollar amount of books from the library in order to "get even".))

LETTER FROM ROBERT SABELLA
13 Marshall Trail
Hopatcong, NJ 07843
26 August 1981

'Re:Barry Malzberg's "The Engines of the Night": science fiction has almost as many definitions as it has readers. Not surprisingly, I have my own axiomatic definition, borne out of my training in mathematics. I have yet to find any stories which are glaring exceptions to my definition which makes me think it is valid.

'The world as we know it is defined by an inviolate set of axioms. These include the laws of science as well as all historical events. Any story which accepts these axioms is mainstream fiction.

'If you add any corollaries to the defining axioms you create an amended universe. A story set in such a universe is science fiction. The Foundation Trilogy is science fiction since it assumes the existence of a galactic empire, psycho-

history, space travel, etc. The more axioms required the more science fictional a story is. Hence, The Foundation Trilogy is more SFnal than James Gunn's "The Listeners" whose only assumption is the existence of extraterrestrial aliens.

'If you replace any of the defining axioms with alternate axioms, you create a universe which is not compatible with our "real" universe. Any stories set in such universes are fantasy. THE LORD OF THE RINGS is fantasy since it allows the existence of magic which is not acceptable in our "real" universe. If you consider time travel as impossible, then all time travel stories become fantasy. Should it be proven that time travel is possible, then time travel stories can jump the gap from fantasy to science fiction or even to mainstream!

'Any comments?'

((I hope we don't develop a hierarchy of sf stories (and authors) who are rated by a more-sfnal-than-thou snobbery system, to the point where we are left with a "pure" few and a "tainted" many.))

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER
113 Deepdale Road
Stratford, PA. 19087
June 27, 1981

'There's an idea in DANSE MACABRE which I didn't mention in the review, but which might interest you. King says we believe in vast conspiracies because the notion is comforting. It is far easier to talk of Pinko-Nazi-Rockefeller conspiracies, and comforting on the mind to believe in such, because otherwise one might have to consider that the assassinations of JFK, RFK, John Lennon, etc., are the random acts of psychopaths and mean nothing, that the Vietnam War was an ongoing disaster that just grew and grew and nobody planned it, that in fact the course of human events has no rhyme or reason to it at all. King's idea is that paranoia is the last-ditch defense of a mind beset by horrible events that, from every possible angle, don't make any sense.

'Maybe you'd care to comment, either in SFR or CONSPIRACY NEWSLETTER.

'Tell Doug Hoylman that the fact that the Anti-Christ starred in something called "Bedtime for Bonzo" is all part of the plot.'

((I'm sorry to see that you have been taken over by the Yog-Sluggoth power elite and are mouthing the Chaos

party line. I had thought you too intelligent to fall for that intellectual garbage. Unless, of course, They are paying you! Of course some events are the result of random, solitary madmen. But some are planned. The trick is to discern which is which. Only us keen-minded paranoids seem able to do that. But go on, Darnell, go on living in your dream world. I can but pity you.))



LETTER FROM F. PAUL WILSON
662 Rolling Hills Ct.
Brick Town, NJ 08723
August 17, 1981

I've always found Schweitzer's "Vivisector" one of the more interesting features of SFR and the one in #40 was no exception. It prompted me to go back to SONGS FROM THE STARS which I had bounced off the wall in disgust after trudging through the first few chapters (Spinrad must have set a record for most frequent use of "karma" on a single page); I plowed on and found it to be a rewarding book in the end.

The column also brought back my own disagreements with DANSE MACABRE. "Little Shop of Horrors" is one of my favorite Corman films; it has a monster plant that looks like a giant albino mussel in drag that shouts, "Feed me!" and, after ingesting an armed robber, spits out his pistol with a disdainful "Prti!"
Not a "meatloaf" movie.

*King also exhibits a disturbing tendency to dwell on the splatter films (surely the bottom rung of schlock) at the expense of THE EXORCIST, which I consider a masterpiece -- from the first bump in the night to the end where Fr. Karras challenges the demon to take him instead, not out of altruism, but because he felt if he could find proof of the devil, he could once again believe in God. A magnificent horror novel and film. Or perhaps I feel that way because of my Catholic background, my own crisis of faith at an early age (faith lost), and the four years I spent at Georgetown U. not six blocks from the scene of the story. But the book sold over 8 million copies and the movie was the top grosser P.S.W.

(Pre-StarWars); Blatty must have said something to a lot of people.

And please run more of those comma-impooverished essays from THE ENGINES OF THE NIGHT. Malzberg cares more about writing and writers than any ten people I know; there's a dark beauty about those pieces.

((It's curious how the occasional low budget macabre comedy sticks in people's minds and becomes a kind of cult classic. DARK STAR is rapidly entering that class now.

((I have no more chapters from THE ENGINES OF THE NIGHT; they were available only during the time of pre-book publication, and Barry hasn't sent any more.))

CARD FROM ROBERT A. BLOCH
2111 Sunset Crest Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90046
August 7, 1981

'While reading a fascinating item in the letter section -- mine -- I happened across Harlan Ellison's comments on critics who persist in picturing him as either (a) too young or (b) too old. I sympathize with Harlan; this hangup on age is ridiculous and has little or nothing to do with an objective evaluation of a writer's work. The same holds true in film reviewing where the director (there are no writers in films, you know) is generally characterized as "young" or "veteran", as though chronology constituted a criterion. As far as I'm concerned, Ellison is neither young nor old -- just a helluva good writer -- and that's all anyone should be concerned with. The rest is garbage. Hoping you are the same.'

((Yes, let's take agism, sexism, racism and dogmatism out of writing; from now on no writer is allowed to reveal his/her age-race-sex-religion or size or taste in junk food. Let the work be judged on its own merits. Now that that's settled, got any other problems? What's that? GIGO??))

LETTER FROM BRUCE D. ARTHURS
3421 W. Poinsettia, Phoenix,
AZ, 85029
5 August 1981

'Having read Harlan Ellison's letter in SFR #40, I felt I had to write in response and apology. Har-

lan listed, in his letter, some seventeen stories he's written in the last six years. Looking the list over, I found that of the seventeen, I had read ... five.

'Five? Five? Only FIVE?! And that's the sort of percentage I based my remarks in SFR #39 on? For shame, Arthurs, for shame. Whether or not my remarks have any basis in reality, I think it's evident that I had no basis to make such remarks, and I hereby give Harlan my apologies and my promise to pick up that copy of SHATTERDAY I saw on the "New Arrivals" shelf at the library the other day.

'Actually, the main reason Harlan's name rose to the fore when I was thinking about writers stuck in niches goes back in time to an Iguanodon Anecdote. Now, like most Iguanodon Anecdotes, the odds are very, very favorable that the whole story is a lie and never happened at all. I should have remembered that simple fact.

'At any rate, what I heard from Bill Patterson was that, in preparing the Iguanodon Program Book, Harlan had been asked to write a story for the PB. "Sure", Harlan replied. Then, according to Bill, Harlan was asked if, just for a change of pace and to surprise all his devoted readers, he could possibly write a "cute fuzzy little bunny-rabbit story" for the PB. "Sure", Harlan supposedly replied. And, when Harlan's story finally got turned in, it had the title of "The Executioner of Malformed Children" and was definitely not a cute fuzzy little bunny-rabbit story. And that's the main reason Harlan's name came to mind when I was writing that letter to you.

'Also, incidentally, since writing that letter to you, I've started reading Phil Dick's VALIS, and most definitely have to retract my remarks on him also. I feel it is as good as anything he has written before, and is also both one of the saddest and the goddamned funniest books I've read since CATCH-22, and I suspect it may well end up in the same category as Heller's book, i.e., in the event of nuclear war, grab it and run.

'In any event, my letter in SFR #39 isn't the first time I've publicly made an ass of myself, and probably won't be the last, *sigh*. Maybe I should stick to trying to write salable fiction. But then what would you do for someone to make wise and witty rejoinders too?

((I'd bring back Alter-Ego.))

LETTER FROM FREDERIK POHL
320 East 22nd Street, 4M
New York City, 10010
3 Sept. 1981

'I see by your letter column that people are picking on the inefficient, slipshod old SFWA again. Well, they're right. SFWA looks inefficient from the outside, but that is as nothing to the way it looks from within -- I was president for two painful years, and it just about drove me up the wall.

'I don't know what can be done about it, though. SFWA is chronically underfunded. It takes on far more projects than are reasonable or practical. What is surprising is that it gets as much done as it does, since it is kept going by a dozen or so volunteers each year who get the privilege of working their asses off, at great cost to their writing time and thus their solvency -- and what they get for it is what they're getting in your letter columns: a lot of bitching.

'There's nothing wrong with bitching, but for SFWA members there is a Better Way. All any complaining member needs to do about an officer whose work he doesn't approve is run against him. He'd probably be elected, and serve him right.'

((What? Put our time and effort where are mouths are? That's one of the horrible challenges extant. The other is "Put up or shut up." Spoil sport.))

LETTER FROM CHRISTOPHER PRIEST
2 Huddispiitt Cottages, Lewdown,
Okehampton, Devon EX20 4DZ,
England
31 July 1981

'As any faneditor with a healthy lettercolumn knows, a dispute which goes on too long gets to be a drag eventually. Which is roughly why I didn't answer Jerry Pournelle's letter in SFR #39. What I've said about SFWA is on record, and as far as I can see remains more or less unchallenged. (And going by some of the letters in SFR #40, the usual SFWA incompetence and inefficiency continues.)

'Chalker claims that he is willing to listen to arguments about SFWA, but that the only argument I gave him was the words, "It's just what I would have expected". Chalker reminds your readers that my business is with words, but that these were all I could muster.

'Unfortunately for Mr. Chalker, my actual words are on record --

(SFR #38, pp. 41-42). They don't include the ones he quoted. Who's in business with words?

'For people who have mislaid their copies of SFR #38, the contents of pp. 41-42 are :

"A long and boring description of the incompetence of the people (like Mr. Chalker?) who have been running SFWA for the last decade;

"A long and boring repudiation of Chalker's dull-witted belief that the Hugo and the Nebula are the same kind of award;

"And a moderately long-and-not too-boring concrete suggestion for a replacement of the crooked Nebulas. (Mr. Chalker was quoted at this point: 'The Nebulas are and will remain a joke.')

'Mr. Chalker obviously has trouble with reading, and gave up long before all this. Have you ever thought of bringing out a large-print edition for people like him?'

((I do already; you're reading it.))

LETTER FROM IAN COVELL
2 Coppgrove Close, Berwick Hills,
Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS3
7BP, England
17.VI.1981

'I don't know if you'd be interested in making a comment on this, or quoting part of this letter. J.T. McIntosh has given me leave to mention it around -- on my suggestion that a little quiet hinting might bring results for him. As background: Some years ago, I got in touch with J.T. McIntosh to interview him, add a bibliography and bring the result out as a small booklet. The booklet has still not been printed, but we did get in touch. Due to J.T.M.'s output, the bibliography needed only small updatings as the years went on. Now, it seems there will never be any more updatings at all.

'J.T. McIntosh has announced he has given up writing entirely.

'The reasons are basically financial, but with two fairly heavy last straws to break the camel's back.

'The first is a short story. Until I mentioned it, J.T.M. did not know the story "World of God" had even been published in GALAXY. Although the new owners did and do still acknowledge some responsibility for the story, that is as far as it has gone. J.T.M. has never received

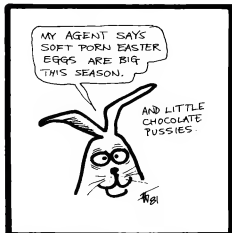
any payment for its printing. In my opinion, the magazine's purchase entailed the financial side, too, but

'The foolish thing about it was that beforehand J.T.M. had made a decision. He would send out the four new short stories he had written. If 3, or 2 or even the one sold, he would stay in SF. Not knowing of the GALAXY printing, he decided against.

'The second straw was a fairly terrible and shabby treatment from a British publisher. They engaged J.T.M. to write a book on wine-and-beer-making. For a year he planned the book, trying to get confirmation on payment. At the end, the publisher reneged and repudiated all claim... leaving J.T.M., after nearly two years, having always planned to start writing, but not actually doing so ... from there it devolved to just not writing at all.

'I hope you find this news as sad as do I. While J.T.M. hasn't published much recently, at least one of his recent books, THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD BEGINS (hilariously/sickeningly bowdlerised, cut, reshaped and generally mutilated by Roger Elwood as RULER OF THE WORLD) manages to combine not only spaceships, galactic intrigue and revolution, but also sound economic and social problems to produce its wolvish ending. No need to mention the early acclaimed stuff like ONE IN 300 and 200 YEARS TO CHRISTMAS or the middle period OUT OF CHAOS (with an almost exclusive concentration on character) to the slightly later little excellences like SUICIDERS/SPACE SORCERS and the incredible TRANSMIGRATION which -- like Shaw's GROUND ZERO MAN -- may called "non-SF" and controversial.

'J.T.M. has always had problems with variant editions of his works, some being very strangely edited (on one famous occasion, on excerpt from the book was used as the cover blurb ... after which the section was ex-



cised from the body of the novel!)... and has had troubles in the past with unpaid pirate editions and other unpaid stories.

'Much of what I have said is only personal comment. The facts, though, are accurate.'

((The horror stories mount up, like a Vietnam body-count, of editorial and publisher rip-off. Maybe we should have a few horror stories from editors and publishers of authorial misdeeds, crimes, felonies and cheating. Surely laziness, greed, immorality and nose-picking are not exclusive provinces of the packaging end of science fiction.))

LETTER FROM RONALD R. LAMBERT
2350 Virginia
Troy, MI 48084
August 15, 1981

'Generally I refrain from commenting on anything Barry Malzberg says. I hate picking on somebody who feels ganged-up on already. Also I am well aware to begin with that Barry has a well-integrated, highly developed world view with which I totally disagree. But this time I must say something about his claim that science fiction is not a serious field because if us denizens of the field were really serious about things we would kill each other. Now, Barry is damning us for being tolerant!

'Barry is not, to my knowledge, a barbarian. However, in this instance he is making the same mistake that barbarians have persistently made throughout history: supposing that the tolerance and restraint manifested by civilized people are indications of weakness and lack of commitment. Time after time the barbarians that dog society have been rudely corrected when civilized people have exerted the superior strength their civilization gives

them to mop up the battlefield with the barbarians, and yet even today barbarians still persist in deluding themselves that barbarian behavior (such as ruthlessness, viciousness and eating beer cans raw) gives them superior strength, and they look with contempt upon civilized behavior.

'Barry certainly should know better than this. How can he criticize our tolerance -- maintained, as he notes, in the face of myriad, wildly divergent viewpoints -- and hold our virtue up as evidence that science fiction has served us ill? You have forgotten the Renaissance, Barry. To most of us, the Renaissance is still alive. To Barry, apparently, it is the Black Death that is still alive.

'Dick, you might be interested to know that Mark McGarry took note of my previous letters in SFR in which I complained about the year-long delay I experienced in getting a response to my application for membership in SFWA. He reiterated my main points for the readers of SFWA FORUM (#77) in his column, with appropriate comments. I also received a nice note from Jerry Pournelle who saw my letters in SFR #40, promising to see what he could do. Other new applicants for membership in SFWA who have suffered similarly have written to me to commiserate. Recently I learned that the duties of SFWA membership secretary have been taken away from Somtow Sucharitkul and given to Timothy Sullivan. So you see, your zine really is influential. What occurs in these vibrant pages gets noticed! And here you thought parakeets were your biggest fans'

LETTER FROM WAYNE KEYSER
1111 Army-Navy Drive, A-710
Arlington, VA 22202
August 13, 1981

'Your comments on the inside back cover of SFR #40 concerning Dungeons & Dragons were too true. At this year's DISCLAVE, a party of "born-again fans" were passing out literature warning about the malevolent influences lurking behind a number of things we take for granted, as well as the more obviously sinister things like Tarot-card reading and Ouija-board sessions. Evidently, the game of D&D is dangerous to Christian health because (1) it becomes an obsession, taking up scads of time that could more profitably be spent on more productive activities, (2) that vast amounts of time is spent totally immersed in a

fantasy world, (3) that fantasy world contains elements of Satanism, Black Magic, evil gods with which the player can actually choose to align his character, (4) players are encouraged to solve their characters' (or, by extension, their own projected personal) problems by raw aggression (after all, you can't walk up to the school principal and draw your +3 magic sword, can you?). No doubt there were other points raised, like the disappearance of that obviously disturbed player at some college a while back. I spent a long time looking through my files, but could not find the pamphlet itself. Anyway, most fans laughed this off, but the pamphleteers were serious and (perhaps more disturbing than if they'd been Bible-thumping maniacs) they were inclined to engage in intelligent discussion and calm reasoning. I admire their manners and respect their right (nay, duty) to speak out for what they believe in (I'm a Christian myself), but I find the reasoning awesomely faulty ... like so much naysaying, it demands that the entire society condemn that which is too much for the least mature of us to handle. It's as though they were demanding that everyone abstain from driving cars because some people are so damned inept that they can't drive safely.

'Worse, accompanying the D&D pamphlet was another listing the many other things too hot for the Christian to handle: Magic (in the sense of sleight-of-hand, card tricks, etc.) because it tends to draw the mind to possible Satanic influences, and Ventriloquism, because it's been documented (snicker!) that this effect is a physical impossibility and is actually caused by demonic voices speaking through the mouth of the dummy! Betcha did not know that, didja?

'No doubt you feel as frustrated as I do in the face of such shoddy thinking. However, shoddy thinking has been the norm throughout history, and has generally been hailed as revolutionary advancement when some new form of absurdity has appeared. Witness a recent example: the mid-60s to mid-70s focus of the "counterculture" on experience and intuition as opposed to logic and reality-testing ("don't think about it, feel it, open yourself to the flow", and on and on and on ... "express yourself" when, in so many instances, the self in question was hardly worth expressing).

'We're only looking at two aspects of the same mental laziness, I think. If you come from a rule-making, moralistic, judgmental, Bible-based background and something feels evil, you can always work from your conclusion to find thousands of

TAKE AWAY SEX AND
VIOLENCE AND WHAT'S
LEFT?

SITCOMS AND
GAME SHOWS?



reasons why that thing must actually be evil. And in a book so thoroughly philosophical and spiritual as the Bible, you can always find (or distort) chapter and verse to support anything. My Bible teacher used to take great glee in pointing out that there is not one thing in the Bible that condemns premarital sex, drinking or abortion, but there is a great deal that condemns hate ("Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer already"), the judging of others by one's own standards ("first remove the beam from thine own eye"), and especially (you don't hear this one preached much) the imposing of one's own standards on other people (Paul did it ... Paul was a bit of a Moral Majoritarian ... but Peter carried on at length about the need for tolerance).

I catered a celebration at a Gay church a few weeks ago (30 pizzas in an hour and a half! Whew!), and there I saw not only a fervent and serious spiritual focus but noted far less sexual tension and far less indulgence in judging and "tasking" than I ever saw at any other church. I'd like to tell Jerry Fallwell about that, but I'm afraid his parishioners would take after me with pitchforks, tar and feathers. Sigh.

((I expect, any year now, to be informed that SFR is off the Devil and proscribed, taken off shelves, burned, shredded, and Put On The List. All things come to he who publishes a fanzine long enough. I could use the publicity.))

LETTER FROM PIERS ANTHONY JACOB August 17, 1981

In ALIEN THOUGHTS you quote David _____ who quotes Gene Wolfe and comments on learning disability. Now I agree basically with David's comment, and I believe Wolfe is a fine writer, but both are being careless with their language. Take Wolfe's SHADOW OF THE TORTURER novel; on top of page 173 of the paperback edition he uses the expression "... that gave no clue as to whether he believed her or not". Efficiency of expression surely begins at home. But my more fundamental objection is to the comment both people make on learning disability. Take it from one who has been a math teacher and who has also raised a learning-disabled child: L-D is not necessarily a synonym for laziness or stupidity, any more than the mathematical term *i* is a synonym for nonsense, despite the abuse of both terms by the ignorant. I believe in plain speaking too, but

these people are indulging here in prejudice rather than clarification. Which is not to deny that many lazy or stupid students may claim to be learning disabled, or that lazy or stupid teachers may classify them as such erroneously; it's just that there is a distinction that David and Gene ought to master before commenting further on the matter. Otherwise, they are merely countering ignorance with more ignorance, a futile effort.

'Say hello to Alter for me; I always did prefer him to you.'

((Choke I'll send your regards if Alter ever sends a change-of-address card. Have you written any readable novels yet?))*

LETTER FROM JOE R. LANDSALE 608 Christian, Nacogdoches, TX, 75961. August 21, 1981

'First of all, would like to say SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW is something I look forward to every three months, and it always gives me a boost, even though none of my work has properly been science fiction. Nearly all writings have been in the mystery and horror fields, with occasional excursions into the Western field and a few others.

'One thing Mr. Poul Anderson mentioned in issue #40 was the censorship trend. Have to agree with him.

'My first novel, a suspense/mystery, had a hard go of it with most publishers. One called me a racist because the killer in the book hated blacks and killed off a black prostitute early on. He forgot to read a few pages more to discover that the hero of the novel was black. It was much easier to just knee-jerk and write me a rejection that called me a racist. That hurt.

'Some felt the theme of the book too right wing. Did not like the idea of the book postulating that some people are born psychopaths, and are not merely the result of poor potty training. Maybe it is potty training. I don't know. But the beef seemed to be that it did not go along with their "sociological training". (Quotes are mine.)

'In a way my book speculates, as science fiction speculates. I think I have the right to do this.

'Personally, I was an anti-Vietnam War person. However, I find the



idea of editors not buying a book because it is pro-war, distasteful and stinking of censorship. If it's a poor book that is one thing, but inflicting opinions is something quite different. Print another that is anti-war, but allow any competent writer with a good story to have his or her say.

'As for the "Feminist Mafia" you mention: You might be surprised, at how much power they have. I am in league with their cause, their thoughts, but not in league with any group that wants to force these views on another.

'Oh, the hell with it. No one ever said this job was going to be easy.'

((Curious how the WRITER'S DIGEST and the other writer magazines never seem to include such vital "taboo" information in their market reports. Seems a professional writer must develop very, very sensitive trends antennae, much to New York, be willing to socialize and party a lot in order to avoid offending and find the right path.))

LETTER FROM MARK J. MC GARRY 560 Main Street, #1-B West Haven, CT 06516 17 August 1981

'I hope someone writes to you in response to Poul Anderson's letter in SFR #40. I, too, would like to know what the unwritten restrictions on theme are. I had assumed that some of the more pernicious tendencies in a lot of modern SF were

just trends, and I'd much rather have a physical enemy or two to shake my stick at.

I think we can leave Stanley Schmidt (ANALOG) and Sheila Gilbert (Signet/NAL) off the list of narrow-minded. Schmidt ran a story of mine on the cover of his November 1979 which featured a homosexual protagonist. It wasn't blatantly stated (any more than one would blatantly state a protagonist was heterosexual), but the evidence was there to be tripped over, and I got no flack from anyone and Stan never said a word one way or the other. Sheila Gilbert brought out a continuation of that story, my novel, SUN DOGS, in February 1981, with the homosexuality pointed up a bit, and nothing was said then either. Now, I'm doing a hard SF novel for Signet about (among other things) the political climate in 1973 and no men in white sheets have come knocking.'

((They've used up; they don't wear sheets anymore.))

LETTER FROM POLYPHEMUS August 11, 1981

'Dear REG: Before you write this off as another crank letter, (in this case not an-onymous (NFP) but pseud-onymous) let me cite my credentials. I am one of the Secret Masters of Science Fiction Publishing. Not Science Fiction, that's another game altogether, but SFPro-Pub. I won't define that further except to say that I have enormous influence on what does and does not get published these days, and am in the position of One Who Knows. I am also male.

'Hence this letter. A quick thumb-count of SFPeditors these days who Make A Difference will show that women outnumber men by a ratio of about 6:5, counting editorial assistants. This is a Very Low Figure for Publishing In General, where the number of women to men editors is about 3:1.

'I'm hearing echoes, from you and others, of an ominous "Feminist Mafia" who presumably censor what gets published according to their biases. That rumor scares the shit out of me because I recognize it for exactly what it is: the spectre of the "A-Woman's-Place-is-In-the-Ovens" philosophy currently being touted by Fallwell, Schlafly and the other Reaganmandate neovictorians.

'Look. The economy is contracting. Options are shrinking. Traditionally, in that kind of milieu,

somebody reinvents the subservience of women to drive them out of the labor force so that "bread winners" can get their due. It's exactly what Hitler did in the early thirties, when he realized that the independence of women was a material threat to a unified contral government. Women, in case you had forgotten, are the Original Subversives.

'Or take Libertarianism, a noble, anarchistic philosophy that has now provided cover for a group of Apocalyptic who are Getting Guns in order to Blow Away the Niggers. These same types largely bemoan the demise of He-Man literature, and with their whiskey-breathed bellows decry the intrusion of "them wimmin" into their beloved sci-fi.

'Have you ever seen a woman raped? Have you ever been raped? One of the Nifty Ideas that every slush-pile reader comes across at least three times a day, is the Hand-some Barbarian/Engineer who brutally rapes the Young Princess-And-She-Loves-It. It used to baffle me, then it disgusted me, now it gives me little willies of fear to think how Many of Them there are Out There.

So what could a "Feminist Mafia" be, in these circumstances? What Paul Anderson speaks of when he says writers must toe the Party Line These Days? No. Its a projected fear of a certain cadre of writers who don't give a flying fuck if editors select in favor of the humiliation, mutilation and jerk-off contempt traditional in sci-fi, but get scared for their livelihoods when somebody, for a change, looks for real female characters who do something more than Lie Back and Whimper.

'Despite what anyone might have told you, REG, women are not meat. They are people just like us, with desires and a necessity for dignity, self-respect and fantasy just like the rest of us. The fact that masochism is such a strong motif in Bodice-Ripper Romances is no excuse. Those women are perfect exemplars of the barefoot-and-pregnant philosophy currently being promulgated elsewhere. As an Atheist, you should recognize the Old Shuck-and-Jive for what It Is: Superdaddy in the Sky with his Pick of the Litter. As the LOCUS statistics prove, the kind of Women Who Read Science Fiction are upwardly-mobile, affluent, college educated, and able to hold their own in an arm-wrestling match or Deep Debate.

'Women, (says One Who Knows) also comprise Sixty-Seven Percent of The Book Biz. (Seventy-Four Percent of Fiction.) Yet Sci-Fi has traditionally been a Man's Category.

Not a He-Man's Category, mind you, but the kind of literature that the wimpy kid picked last on the softball team read instead of practicing, in which a Cosmisonic Muscularifier made him Lord of the Galaxy. Sci-Fi at its most macho has been a device for integrating the deviant kid into the Male Pecking Order. Obviously it had a lot of insights for a girl who could filter out the pronouns.

'Another related claim lately has been that of the top SF titles this year Not One Has Been Real Science Fiction. What's this? THE SNOW QUEEN? Not SF (never mind Jack Vance). The theory goes that Women not being Rational Beings, don't appreciate hard science fiction (Freudian references intended). Hard Science Fiction, what Vonnegut called The Big Space Fuck, is all about Spreading the Seed of Humanity Throughout the Stars, with Spanner in one hand and Blaster in the other, both Longer Than They Are Wide.

'I've seen a particular squirm on the faces of women friends of mine when I ask them why they don't read science fiction. It's like asking them why they don't read pornography. Because that's what it is, at its worst, power-pornography. Don't ask me, ask Norman Spinrad.

'So the answer to the question is No. The "Feminist Mafia" isn't as powerful in SF as you've heard. That's like asking in 1939 if it's true what you hear about the Jews taking over Germany. Women have been fighting for tiny shreds of respect for millennia, and any effect they may have on one category that gets its energy from challenging the status quo palls into insignificance against the rising tide of anti-female backlash Out There.

'To get back to Contracting Economies for a moment (paragraph 4). In times of abundance, all sorts of deviance becomes profitable: Feminism, homosexuality, racial equality, social welfare and science fiction. To suggest that science fiction would benefit by aping the reactionary retrenchment of the rest of society is to suggest that it is what its detractors have always said it is, a parasite form feeding on the glorification of the Machine, symbol of the Rational, anti-Feminine principle.

'Of course, it will happen anyway. Writers are already being paid in gold. Ayn Rand's sales have never been better. The slush piles are filling up with New-Right-After-the-Next-War and Mercenaries-From-the-Stars novels. You can't stop the river. Back in the Ovens, Girls, it's time for the Gas.

"But you can blow the whistle, even if you have to adopt some ridiculous pseudonym like 'Polyphemus' to do it. There's a hatchet job about to go down, as predictable as Fallwell's next sermon. 'The winners are ruining sci-fi. They've got to be stopped. Who am I going to drink with? And besides, I know she's a rotten editor because she wouldn't put out.' And besides, They're All Dykes (the ultimate slam, even though most of them are married)."

"The Truth of the Matter is that the Best SF is Human SF, whatever the stripe of the writer. Don't ask me, ask Paul Anderson, Ted Sturgeon, Herb Varley, Bob Heinlein (than which there is no whicher) Ray Bradbury, Edgar Pangborn and a couple of women besides."

"So come on, Whistle-Blowers, join the parade. Harlan? Fritz? Ursula? Tip? Bob? Norman? Jerry? Are the Amazon SuperBitches Trashing Sci-Fi? Or are they continuing in the valiant struggle of John W. Campbell to create realer, more human people for those shiny universes. (And I haven't even got to fantasy yet. I'll just remark what one woman I know told me. "Any novel where a woman succeeds without being raped or harassed is a fantasy.")"

"Sorry for the ravings, Dick, but This One's Important."

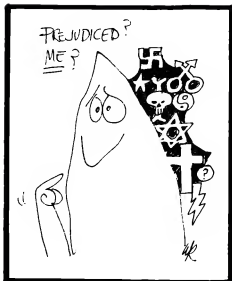
"Pseudonymously yours,
'POLYPHEMUS'"

((There is an element of truth in your feeling that the political-social-cultural times are a-changing toward or into a more traditional social matrix.

((Why this is happening, and what it has to say about basic man-woman relationships on a biological-institutional level is worth a lot of discussion.

((But calling me, and others in sf, advocates of "A-Woman's-Place-is-In-the-Ovens" is over-reacting, wrong, dirty pool, and hysterical. Also, perhaps, a response permeated in fear and insecurity?)

((Sf writers who complain about Feminist biases and censorship and blacklists rarely want those Feminists' editorial jobs---they only want their novels and stories judged fairly as fiction (as the Market would accept or reject them). Too many editors reject good sf out of hand for ideological reasons---what sf "should" be, or because what sells "should not" be allowed to get to the readers. They'd rather lose money on a book they like and which they think the public "ought to" like and buy, than accept and pub-



lish a sexist, male chauvinist rig-gish novel which they know in their guts will make money...sometimes lots and lots of money.

((Your rejection of and contempt for "Hard" (penile-oriented, male juvenile technological) science fiction and its instinctive aggressive, dominating, "seed-the-stars" characteristics is in my view suicidal if you actually follow that view in your editorial decisions when buying novels.

((There are more and more young women who are buying and reading sf, and no one---no one!---is advocating a return to women characters in sf who weep and cling, or a strong Gop treatment of rape-and-masochism. I am all for a pro-rated portion of Feminist sf, for women who are strong-minded, competent, independent.

((But there must be a recognition of the emotional needs-in-fiction of the insecure young male who has made up the bedrock readership of sf for fifty years.

((Trying to wean him away from what he wants to read to what he "should" read is only going to drive him away and result in a constantly falling sales rate.

((The Market will rule, especially in hard times. The editors and publishers who give the readers what they want (what they will pay for) will survive and prosper. The Sales Reports are the cold equations; perhaps the intensity and violence of your reactions in your letter are an indication that those cold equations are beginning to freeze your Liberal balls.

((I've watched the science fictional scene for 45 years...seen dozens...hundreds...of editors come and go. The Market (reality) always rules in the long run.

((I'm not saying women should not be editors, nor that Feminist sf

shouldn't be published, nor that women in sf shouldn't be strong and self-reliant. I am saying that the natural, bedrock sf readership should not be alienated, treated with contempt, or shot upon by a smug, "superior" self-appointed elitist coterie of self-deluded idiots.))

LETTER FROM GEORGE WARREN
POB EB
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
August 8, 1981

'SFR #40 ravishly readable as always, full of reasons for good knockdown arguments and whatever. Tell me: How does Elton Elliott cover the movie scene so expertly and comprehensively -- from Portland, of all places?

'Your own review of RADIIERS OF THE LOST ARK jibed with my views for the most part -- but you are dead wrong when you allege a Christian point of view in the philosophical underpinnings of the story. It is in fact impossible to sneak anything but wildly derogatory of Christianity into the movies at the present time. The point of view is that of Judaism, which alone in the world believes in the continuing supernatural Powers of such Old Testament items as the Ark of the Covenant. Only Jews (who, as ever, continue to control the movies) believe that the old covenant has any force. Christians believe the old covenant was superseded and made worthless by the advent of Christ, and that the Jews are kidding themselves. To give perspective to the matter, one might point out that the Mormons believe both the Christian and Jewish covenants with the Deity are old-hat stuff, having been themselves superseded by the Mormon covenant. I am not aware of later covenants which may have superseded this one, but I am sure there are some out there lurking about, and I am sure they consider every one of the foregoing groups to be kidding themselves. But you are as bad about Christianity as I am about the Mafia, and find your bete noire hiding under every cabbage leaf.

'Have you seen DRAGONSLAYER? I thought it slight and in many ways insubstantial, but visually breathtakingly beautiful and, with perhaps Brian de Palma's dreadful BLOWOUT, the best art-directed film of the year.

'About Harlan Ellison's letter expressing confusion over a judgment by Bruce Arturs: Who says Ellison has to grow? To do anything new? Jesus Christ, what is new in the field? The only thing Ellison ever

had to offer is the same thing any author has to offer: a fresh and different personality. And once the writer has found his voice he'd damn well better not go around changing it or monkeying with it, but would do better always simply to let it have its head.

'I'd rather not name names just now, but you asked for censorship info. I had an agent refuse even to submit a novel outline for me two years ago because it might "embarrass" said agent to submit a story which in any way bent out of shape the unwritten censorship code that says there must never be a homosexual villain in any book. The villain was sympathetic, in many ways more so than the heroine was; he was by the end of the story more victim, in some ways, than the villain, but the party line was that no books were to be allowed to come to print which had homosexual villains. I parted company with the agent amicably shortly thereafter. I still like this person, but I cannot deal with censorship that avoids even the bare discussion of a subject.

'Getting more specific, I wrote a novel about trucking the year before that. Playboy Press's editor pressured me to change a number of party-line things. The heroine, for instance, was not to be allowed to date, and presumably bed down with, a black man in my script, the implication being that this lowered her status in the eyes of the reader. (My answer was, "Jesus Christ, what planet are you living on?") Another complaint by the editor was that the heroine was not tough, independent, Women's Libby enough, that her position vis-a-vis the men in her life was too passive. (My comment: "God almighty, that's the heroine's problem, which she has to solve.") ((She does, too.)) "For Chrissakes, if I don't give her a goddam problem there ain't any story." Richard, imagine having to point this out to an editor.)

'The crowning glory of my association with this horrible firm was when a proofreader -- not an editor but a god-damned proofreader, who has no business making any editorial comment at all -- called me coast-to-coast at the company's expense to complain that I allowed the truck-drivers to speak disparagingly of homosexuals, and should be performing an educative function as an author or by having them speak differently, with compassion and understanding of the tender blossoms. (My response was something like, "You set every God-damned word immediately, or so help me Hannah I'll walk barefoot over hot burning coals all the way back to New York to cut your gizzard

out with a dull soup spoon.") Oh, my God. Richard, have you ever heard five minutes or so of CB talk? Having done so, would you ever for so much as a moment believe a word of liberal dialogue on the lips of a fictional trucker?

'This sort of tripe happens daily. Daily. In the biggest houses in the business. What Poul Anderson has to say is right on target. It is in fact even worse than he says in the case of writers who do not have, as I did not have at the time, the kind of clout he has in the racket.'

((The list of permissible villainy is very narrow now: perhaps that explains why there are so many books out now which use Nazis as villains!))

LETTER FROM PHILIP K. DICK
408 East Civic Center Drive
C-1 Box 264
Santa Ana, CA 92701
August 9, 1981

'Wrong. A lot of young people believe in both God and Christ. More's the pity. You must distinguish the formal religious establishment from the authentic wellsprings of personal devotion. There was a period in the Middle Ages when Christianity had been pushed back to an area smaller than modern Europe; all the signs of the literal total death of the faith were there. Only in comparatively modern times has Christianity become a world religion. Of course, it hinges on what you mean by the term "being a Christian". I was a Christian for years without knowing it ... I guess it's like being a homosexual; you can be like and not face it or realize it or even want to be. The great Christian mystic Jan Van Ruysbroeck (1293-1381) wrote:

"...if you are ravished in ecstasy as highly as St. Peter or St. Paul or as anybody you like, and if you hear that a sick man is in need of hot soup, I counsel you to wake up from your ecstasy and warm the soup for him. Leave God to serve God: Find Him and serve Him in His members; you will lose nothing by the change."

'A religion that teaches this can't be all bad. There is a term much used by the Reformers: The invisible church. It is distinct from -- but overlaps -- the formal, visible church. It is made up of

those whom God has chosen, not those who have chosen God. Geis, my dear friend, you might be a member of that invisible church and not know it. Sorry if this comes as a shock.

((Actually, I've suspected for many years that I was a better Christian than most lip-service or (especially) the most fanatical Christians. But is it possible to reject the basic tenets and dogma of a religion and still be "A better man than I am, Gunga Din.?"))

LETTER FROM ROBERT B. ROSS
September, 1981

'By the way, did you know Daniel Keyes, the renowned author of FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON, has a new novel out? THE FIFTH SALLY is about a woman with five different personalities. The kick is, it's told in the first person, by one of the four branch personalities! It's not SF or fantasy, and it's not as moving as FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON, but it is a good book.'

((Thanks for the tip; sounds like an interesting novel.))

LETTER FROM SHELDON TEITELBAUM
Rehov Anelievich 23/2
Holon, Israel
22 June, 1981

'I hold before me a vintage copy of your magnus opus, ABANDON, (London: Softcover Library, 1972), which could otherwise have been called A GIRL AND HER SCAR, but for with a mind towards the reader you titled THE PUNISHMENT. I just want you to know that it is a bane and a burden to justify tacky porn on your bookshelves in this country. I tell em that I bought it because it's by Mr. Geis, but they really know what I bought it for. Not that it could get a rise out a yeast-cake, but anyway.

'Since my last letter, the ISRAEL SF ASSOCIATION hosted ISRACON I, the first of its kind ever to be held in this country. The event took place last March at the Haddasah Hospital student union in Jerusalem. We had originally expected no more than 200 or so fans, and were both astounded and hard-pressed to accommodate 1500 souls. If this is any indication of things to come, then we are indeed in good shape.

'Many of you by now may have heard that we intend to put together

a major congress to be held next June in Jerusalem. You should have, because we sent out over 6000 brochures to that effect. JERUCON 82, intended as an "integrative congress on science fiction, fantasy and speculative science", will run through the week of June 27- July 3 at Bin-yanei Ha'uma convention center, site of the recent Labour Party convention in Yerushalayim. The idea originated from a talk delivered last year by Dr. Nachman Ben-yehuda to members of the SFWA on the subject of fandom in Israel. There was apparently a feeling that we get off our butts and do something. Harry Harrison has kindly offered to visit Israel prior to the con in order to lend a hand, and a fair number of gentlemen have expressed their intention to make it into town for the event.

FANTAZIA 2000 is still holding its own, and issue #20 hit the stands last week. I myself joined the staff a few months ago as co-editor, although neither myself nor Aharon Hauptman are making a deflating shekel out of the business. We have a circulation of roughly 12000 at present, which in Israel is no mean feat, but the cost of printing is outrageous.'

((Yeah... But ABANDON was not my magnum opus; that appellation should be reserved for ONE IMMORTAL MAN...or ORAL DAUGHTER...or even THREE-WAY APARTMENT (judging by the federal government's efforts to put me in jail for having written it.)

((Good luck with your convention efforts.))

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER
113 Deepdale Road
Strafford, PA 19087
September 14, 1981

'I have lost touch with former SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW contributor, Mark Mansell, who used to be one of my leading fans. Do you have his current address? (The Linden Street, Riverside, CA, one is no good.) I have mentioned him in a book dedication and would like to have a copy sent. If you haven't got his address please run this note in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and see if he turns up.'



I, PROGRAM

I meant to tell you something --
I forget... I forget... I forget...
The robots said to tell you...
I forget... I forget... I forget...

They said that they'd collect
On the debt... Or the bet... I forget...
They said to say they'd get you --
That's a threat... Get you yet... I forget...

The robots said they're coming
At sunset... Not to fret... I forget...
They'll be here before evening --
They regret... They won't let... I forget...

The robots are the masters --
You're their pet... You're all wet... I forget...
They put their metal hands upon me --
I felt sweat... The needle jet... I forget...

There was something else to tell you --
I forget... I forget... I forget...
Something about us robots --
We're well met! Join the net! Don't forget!

-- NEAL WILGUS



BIRD

BY RICK NORWOOD

My stomach is a caged beast
That's used to being fed.
It prowls around inside of me
And rumbles at my head.

My head's a bitter, bloated bird
That's perched upon my shoulder.
It peers about with beady eyes
And keeps on growing older.

WHY THE PUN
IS THE LOWEST FORM OF HUMOR
BY RICK NORWOOD

Once a pun, amid night dreary,
As a pun dread, weak and weary.
Oh, for mania, quaint and curious,
Voluminous for gotten lore.
Sullen leather chamber trappings,
Asimov's wan genial rappings,
Wrapping, wrapping, wrapping, wrapping,
Wrapping round my shamed bards core.
Only bliss, and nothing more.

AND THEN I READ...



BY THE EDITOR

RADIX

By A.A. Attanasio
Morrow Quill Paperbacks, \$8.95

The style is wondrous. The future of Earth both horrifying and marvelous. The future of Man terrifying and...altered.

A.A. Attanasio has created a future history that incorporates a stream of electro-magnetic radiation from the galaxy's core which creates Distorts---gene-flawed humans by the billions, a godmind which finds a home in an Israeli fighter pilot's subtly distorted brain, dozens of wildly dangerous animals, and thirteen hundred years of chaotic struggle by the gene-pure Masseboth to wipe out the Distorts, the creation of a computer intelligence by the Delph (godmind) to run the world.

Aliens come to Earth---the Voors, telepathic, psi-rich minds capable of taking a human body by "Lusk", and the Eo, ethical aliens who try to maintain a kind of balance an order....

The Delph's mind is flawed and keeps creating, subconsciously, its own enemies---eths---humans destined to try to kill the Delph.

The computer/crystal intelligence created to run the world has become insane and by means or artificial humans and animals and birds is able to spy on anyone, kill anyone....and plans to kill the Delph and rule alone and immortal.

I could go on and on and on detailing the wide and wild variety of realisms and phantasms, cultures, societies, characters....

But this novel is above all the story of Summer Kagan, a pure-gene human male---who begins as a vicious, warped slob---and goes through successive forced learnings and transformations into a superb fighting man---a Ranger---into a Voor-possessed, tormented fugitive---into knowledge that he is the new eth---into the final climactic struggle with Rubesus---the artificial intelligence who would rule the world.

But my descriptions are Distorts. My clues are skewed. This novel almost defies encapsulation.

Helplessly, I will quote a few samples of A.A. Attanasio's incredibly precise, sensuous, evocative writing.

The opening paragraph:

'Blinded by the headlights, Summer Kagan lunged off the road and slid down the dirt embankment into the dark. Above and beyond him braking tires squealed furiously. Savage voices yowled as the Nothings, in leather streetgear, rolled out of their Death Crib and chased after him. They were five viper-thin men with blood-bruised eyes and teeth filed to points.'

And on page 182:

'Sitting in a broth of amber light, his limbs moving mechanically, his will paralyzed, Summer felt his heart stop. His toes and hands went on even as the whine of blood, tuning its high note in his ears, thinned out of hearing. Vision narrowed and misty oblivion circled in, muffling his panic---

Pain abrupt as a scream wrenched him out of his trance. The butterfly blade had nicked his thumb. He stared with sudden lucidity at the pale slice of his flesh and saw how the blood was holding back. Then the red flow began, and his heart quopped loudly in his ears.'

Attanasio's use of language is extraordinary:

'Atoms of sweat and breath clouded around Summer, and in those scents he glimpsed whole lives: meals of herb cabbages and roots, nomad memories of mountains and ball-cactus deserts.'

...

'Summer stood up effortlessly, and a sacramental feeling swelled in his legs. The stupor and ache that had thickened in him during his captivity withered, and he was suddenly supple and smooth as a nightsnake, clear as fire. The voor had rested and strengthened his kha, and the power of Iz was his again. He looked at Culler and saw, deeper than the chisel bones and the cave-squatter eyes, into the man's cruel grin. The face was uxorious---married to a self-love so strong it was virtually a hunger. This man lived just behind his face. His eyes were rattling with hate, his flesh-face twitching with a constant flickering of thoughts.'

The temptation is to present quote after quote.

One final observation: this novel is too good for 99% of the world's science fiction readers; it frankly is written far, far above the vocabulary of most of us. And the command of scene, character, background, conflict, concepts...are probably superior to 90% of the writers in the field.

A superior science fiction novel. Read it.

THE GYPSY EARTH

By George W. Harper
Doubleday [for March 1982 publication]

A badly written novel of alien invasion of the solar system, space battles between space armadas, the destruction of Earth by an alien-induced nova of Sol, and the desperate race by humanity's remnants to survive in space and to seek a terrible revenge on the aliens' home planet in another sun system.

The story only lives and grabs the reader during the space battle scenes---of which, fortunately, there are many. Between battles Harper bores the reader with endless descriptions of logistics.

The characters are mostly Scots who man and command the key space force of the United Nations. The hero is Duncan Campbell, whose battle strategy and tactics win the initial battles and result in his command of the asteroid hollowed and fitted to be a super space battleship and which attacks the alien solar system.

The dialect of the Scots is bothersome:

"No, no! Center it carefully there, laddie," groaned Duncan in mock dismay. "Ye ha' your display screen wi' the blip on it...."

And Harper's conception of space battles between masses of spaceships armed with cannon and missiles and torpedoes is suspect.

All that said---clumsy prose, paper-thin characterization, no personality conflicts [except briefly between world leaders], wasted scenes---the novel has an incredible basic man-vs.-alien power that will keep you reading and rooting for mankind. The long, detailed, climactic destruction of the alien fleet and their home planet is riveting.

Harper [in a covering letter] says he deliberately patterned the novel after the style of Doc Smith but tried to update things (computers, the U.N., etc.).

It's a badly flawed novel, but curiously readable. I shouldn't like it---but I do.

THE KEEP

By F. Paul Wilson
William Morrow, \$12.95

A very good supernatural/occult horror novel set in a strange mini-castle on a ridge in deepest Romania during the second World War.

The Nazis have occupied it but--something begins to rip soldiers' throats out and drink their blood. The commander cannot stop the slaughter. He wires for help...and is sent a ruthless SS officer and a two squads of SS troopers.

The horrible killing continues, spreading terror and dread.

A Jewish scholar expert in the keep is sent for. He is dying and must be attended by his beautiful daughter.

Also on his way, alerted by a mysterious signal, is a big, powerful, superstrong red-haired man--from the western Mediterranean.

The entity is an immortal kept imprisoned in a crypt deep in the keep--strange brass crosses are imbedded in every block of stone in its walls--and the clash of forces and of wills and circumstances brings this novel to a bloody, final-death conclusion involving occult powers.

There are s-f elements--rationalized occult, rather--that make this a believable story, and the authenticity Wilson brings to the German army units--the SS unit, the place names and historical detail (some bogus, of course)--creates a convincing reality.

This is F. Paul's best book to date, and seems plotted and characterized to be a prime candidate for filming. It definitely would make one hell of a good movie.

THE HERALD

By Michael Shaara
McGraw-Hill, \$11.95

A final-solution story so dear to the hearts of frustrated idealists. This one supposes a machine which spews out a miles-across bubble of deadly radiation. Only a tiny, tiny percentage of people who are immune or naturally resistant survive.

At first one town in America is "wiped out". The Army surrounds the area and learn a machine is at the heart of the circle of death. They have a "survivor" who is sent in to investigate...

Then Rome is killed by another, similar machine... Then...

A group of scientists has done these deeds--out of altruism, idealism...stupidity.

But as a doomsday radiation machine is started which sends radiation-laden dust into the atmosphere it is only a matter of days

before 95% of the world's population will be wiped out.

And Shaara obviously thinks this would be a good thing: give those special immunes a chance to make a fresh start for humanity.

This sentiment will appeal to the intellectual, idealist elitists [super snobs] who in their heart of hearts consider 95% of humanity not worth saving, bothering with, or caring about.

There are ritual anti-government and anti-authority scenes in the novel to justify all the idealistic killing.

The New York literary elite should love this novel, and praise it to the skies.

On a pure technique/skills level it's okay---a grabber opening hook as a small plane pilot lands at his hometown airport and discovers bodies...as his girl friend passenger dies of the radiation...and he lives on.

But it slows and falls into a literary rut, avoids answering obvious questions, plays a romance number on the reader (the pilot rescues a starving, in-shock girl from the town jail) and makes you wonder how---with this style and this sophisticated mind---Michael Shaara could have won a Pulitzer prize with his previous novel, *THE KILLER ANGELS*.

THE UNREASONING MASK

By Philip Jose Farmer
Putnam, \$12.95

Phil is at top form here with his spaceship captain Ranstan, the bionic [partially], spacer al-Buraq, a wide variety of life-forms, civilizations, planets, menaces...

He has conceived of the universe as a kind of biological entity, and intelligent, advanced-civilization life as a disease. Thus when an automatic life-killer begins attacking human-occupied worlds...

This wild, mind-blowing novel will give you different viewpoints from a variety of angles. Space adventure of the best kind.

NERVE

By Marshall Goldberg
Coward McCann & Geoghegan, \$13.95

Adam McKinnon, medieval researcher, frustrated, tries a new nerve-stimulant drug on himself--and becomes an instant heavyweight champion class fighter...a champion table-tennis player, a superb, unbeatable hockey goalie...

He wants to make a multi-million-

dollar payday as a boxing phenom (at age 45!) and retire to resume his assured researches into this new drug and its applications.

But the drug has some nasty, nearly fatal side-effects....

NERVE is well-written, smooth, with all the obligatory ex-wife scenes, the background scenes, the emotional turmoil scenes.... Much of this is padding. The reader wants more action and suspense and conflict, and the author wants to string the story out with "characterization" and character background. The reader is kept reading, but the resentment lingers on.

THE TULAREMIA GAMBIT

By Steve Perry
Fawcett 1-4411-9, \$2.25

Follows the formula of the now cynical idealist former agent of a national security agency being forced back into its employ to help find the thief who has a top-secret, highly virulent plague weapon.

Perry incorporates a keen interest in martial arts, a fine knowledge of biologics, good to very good characterization...

The use of the mad genius and longtime rival (for the hero's ex-wife and for ego superiority contests) seems hokey and contrived. So, too, are the contortions of motivation required to assure a final showdown martial arts fight-to-the-death at the end of the novel.

A measure of Perry's skill is my outrage at the killing by the villain of the hero's intelligent, sexy, pleasing woman friend, and the hero's stupidity and macho/ego pride as he is suckered into the climactic man-to-man battle when he had the bastard cold in his sights and needed only to pull the damn trigger.

But formula triumphed, of course. As did the hero, the hard way.

An added fillip is the near-future setting of most of this novel: Portland, Oregon and environs.



OTHER VOICES

FIREFLOOD AND OTHER STORIES

By Vonda N. McIntyre
Timescape (Pocket Books), 1979
\$2.75, 237 pp.

REVIEWED BY PATRICIA MATHEWS

Vonda McIntyre writes science fiction about and for human beings, not robots or social structures and she writes extremely hard science fiction. Much of it takes place in a post-Holocaust world in which the high-energy technology is gone forever, but low-energy technology is highly developed and the biological sciences, fantastically advanced. And the starships remain.

The title story, "Fireflood" chronicles the meeting of two Adapted People of the sort first described by C.L. Moore, genetically altered for colonization. Dark is a Digger; standard humans have abandoned her line and confined her people to a reservation. Jay is a Flyer, still placing his hopes in the colonization project. Dark wants an alliance of Adapted People, but will she get it?

Jay's people, the Flyers, are carnivorous, designed to be predatory, ruthless to the defective. "Wings" is the story of two Flyer misfits, one young and one old, finding each other, and a haunting picture of the stark beauty of the Flyer world. "Mountains of Sunset, Mountains of Dawn", is the familiar story of a generation ship, again of Flyers, faced with landing -- but the ship-born generation doesn't want to leave. Again, the Eldest of the crew and one lone young disciple, dare the landing.

"Of Mist, Grass and Sand" is rightfully famous. The story of Snake, the Healer, and her mutated healing snakes, one killed by the fear and ignorance of her patient's parents, stands alone as a story and as the seed chapter of the novel, DREAMSNAKE. This alone is worth the price of the book, but there are others.

"Spectra" is pathos, background unexplained. "The End's Beginning" is the narrative of a dolphin trained for war and loathing what humans have done to him for his mission. "Only At Night" is hardly science fiction at all, but a powerful and moving night in the life of an attendant at the state hospital for the hopelessly retarded. A caring

attendant in a decent hospital; the horror is solely in the plight of the crippled, mindless patients. Those three come from the heart and the place tears come from. Similarly, "The Genius Freaks", told from the standpoint of one of them on the run, amidst a hostile humanity, with a timebomb in her body, sentenced to death at eighteen by accident? Design?

"Recourse, Inc." is the standard series of "Dear Computer" letters in which a frustrated citizen copes with a bill-collector's computer. You don't write these so much as you transcribe what happened to you the last time you tangled with one, then dress it up a little. I wish Recourse, Inc. had a local office!

Two long stories round out the book: "Screwtop" and "Aztecs". "Screwtop" is essentially a Devil's Island story, with a villainous guard, a Very Important Prisoner, a narrator in for a clever and nondestructive series of capers, an innocent who must not let the system get him, against a very well-realized background of colonial hellworld and the customs of McIntyre's universe.

A story to stand beside "Mist, Grass and Sand" in this collection, or Joan Vinge's "Tin Soldier" in the stories of starflight, is "Aztecs", the story of a pilot, physically altered in order to be able to stay awake to fly the interstellar ships. It is the story of her adaptation to her new body, her new status among crew and groundlings and pilots in a complex system where pilots are idolized and the brief, doomed love between the pilot and an unadapted crewmember, fresh from the colonies, who must spend the voyage in coldsleep. Pilots, Crew and Groundlings, the story seems to say, are simply different breeds of cat.

And her pilot remarks, upon being exposed to various space groupies, "The sensitive, intelligent and nonintrusive ones were those one seldom met".

Completely worth the price of the book.



SONGS FROM THE STARS
By Norman Spinrad
Pocket Books, 1981, \$2.50
ISBN: 0-671-82826-6

REVIEWED BY LEIGH KENNEDY

This novel deals with a society after a vaguely-explained "Smash" which was brought on by the uncoolness of Science and Technology. Morality is color-coded: Anything to do with atomics or anything more scientific than a radio is Black; anything utilizing muscle, sun, wind and water is White; some of the mixing of the two, of course, paints your soul Gray. And guess what! Everyone goes along with this rigid system.

Ed Bryant once said that all futures are essentially Californian, but this one can be pinpointed to Marin County. The good folks are vegetarians, use drugs, each other's bodies, and words like mindfuck, headspace, tune out, etc. "Behavioristic" is used as "inevitable" and "karma" is mentioned at least every other page. But not in the sense that the Hindus meant it -- more with the one-life attitude that has contaminated the word.

Clear Blue Lou is the Perfect Master and Giver-of-Justice. He has as clear an idea of what justice is as any tripped-out druggie who's willing to look for a compromise in any tight situation. His girlfriend, Sunshine Sue, is the Queen of Word of Mouth -- she has all the physical

generosity of a hippie-chick and yet the same teasing emotional uptightness of a 1957 From Queen. The black hearted Sorcerer/Scientist, Arnold Harker, moves from being a disgusting slug with a hard core of political passion to a drooling pitiful thing who can't take a cosmic joke.

Spinrad wanted to write a work about the effect of media hype in a post-holocaust world. The idea comes through, but it's muddled with shallow characters, stretches of purple prose (even if one discounts the cuteness of the hip-talk), great globs of summary, false drama and SF clichés.

WHAT IF? VOLUME II

Edited by Richard A. Lupoff
Pocket Books, 1980, \$2.50, 239 pp.

REVIEWED BY LEE WEINSTEIN

Here are seven more stories that Mr. Lupoff feels should have won the Hugo award. They represent the years 1959 to 1965 inclusive. Lupoff's introductions to the stories provide some very interesting background on the factors affecting the voting during the years concerned.

"The Pi Man" by Alfred Bester, representing 1959, is a strong story about a man who is acutely sensitive to patterns of all types and is compelled to behave in bizarre ways to keep the patterns in balance. Bester makes skillful use of linguistic and typographical gimmicks to heighten the effect of the story (years later, during the New Wave, many authors would use such gimmicks for their own sake, at the total expense of storytelling).

"The Lost Kafoozalum" by Pauline Ashwell is a variation on the idea of creating peace between nations by giving them a common enemy. The story centers on a group of Cultural Engineering students who must devise such an imaginary enemy to prevent war on a distant planet. However, I didn't find the characters well-enough drawn to make me care about them or their projects. This is especially true since we get to see very little of the planet itself; it is merely an excuse for the story to take place. I found the piece as a whole long and tedious.

"The Sources of the Nile" by Avram Davidson is a witty and very amusing look at trends in public taste. It is about a writer who traces the source of such trends to a very unlikely source. Definitely award material.

"Where is the Bird of Fire", although quite good, seems a trifle out of place here since it is pure

fantasy. It is the story of how Romulus and Remus, with the help of a Faun named Sylvan and a Dryad named Mellonia, founded Rome. It is a colorful tale that succeeds admirably in bringing an ancient legend to life.

"Standby" by Philip K. Dick is about what happens when the human standby President of the United States must take over when the actual president -- a computer -- is temporarily put out of commission. It has its moments, but I found it to be undistinguished. (My choice for '63 would have been Richard McKenna's "Hunter Come Home", but that's neither here nor there.)

"Now is Forever" by Thomas Disch is a disquieting look at a near future in which civilization is collapsing because of an ultimate copying machine. Everybody can have anything; nothing has any value any more. Powerful story.

"All the King's Men" by Barrington J. Bayley closes out the collection. England, Brazil and South Africa have been taken over by inscrutable insect-like aliens who rule as kings. When the human interpreter for England's king dies, his successor must decide whether to support or betray the alien regime. The story has a compelling strangeness that I am unable to convey here.

All in all, this is a worthwhile collection, both for the stories and for Lupoff's commentary.

FAR FROM HOME
By Walter Tevis
ISBN 0-385-17036-X

GENE WOLFE'S BOOK OF DAYS
By Gene Wolfe
ISBN 0-385-15991-9

Both 181 pp., Doubleday, 1981, \$9.95

REVIEWED BY JAMES J.J. WILSON

FAR FROM HOME is the latest book by Walter Tevis, author of THE HUSTLER and THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH. It is a collection of short stories published in various SF magazines over the past twenty-five years. Some of the story ideas in the book are very clever and amusing. One of Tevis's major problems, however, is that he doesn't appear to be very well-read in SF and, consequently, most of the stories are rather trite and cliché-ridden.

A few of the stories in this book are real gems. One is "The Apotheosis of Myra", about a dream painter which manufactures the ultimate pain-killer. As it turns out, the planet

is one singular being. The story itself, turns out rather predictably but it also shows that Tevis is capable of stunning imagery when he really tries.

In all, FAR FROM HOME contains a few excellent stories but the book, for the most part, is one that any SF reader has read a dozen times.

GENE WOLFE'S BOOK OF DAYS is amazing. Most of the short stories it contains were published in the early '70s. It is arranged so that each of the eighteen stories are supposed to be related in some way to a holiday or feast, starting with Lincoln's Birthday and ending with New Year's Eve. This is clever but it neither adds nor detracts from the stories.

An amazing aspect of this book, and about Gene Wolfe for that matter, is that the stories are generally very well-written and further, they are so varied in style that it almost seems as though they were written by eighteen different authors. "Forleson" is written as simply and with as bland a style as its narrator. It is wonderfully simple and whimsical and this adds to the sheer horror when you realize what the story is really about. "How I Lost the Second World War ..." is a masterpiece of sarcasm and parody. "An Article about Hunting" is so completely immersed in the style of a scholarly article on hunting and yet it contains a wonderfully scathing wit.

Some of the stories in the book are little more than vignettes and one wishes that Wolfe had decided to carry them all to their natural length. In any case, this book is of a consistently impressive high quality and may turn out to be one of the finest short story collections of the year.



MYTH CONCEPTIONS

By Robert Asprin
Donning Company, \$4.95

REVIEWED BY DONN VICHIA

Skeeve is an apprentice magician and Aahz is his demon mentor. This take-off on the sword and sorcery genre is very loosely based on the Seven Sanauri/Magnificent Seven storyline, wherein Aahz convinces Skeeve to apply for a court magician position at a nearby kingdom, Possiltum. With Gleep, the dragon and Buttertut the unicorn, Aahz and Skeeve are soon in over their heads: as court magician, Skeeve has to stop a huge army from attacking his new kingdom. They are soon joined by Tanda, a ravishing assassin and acquaintance from the first book in this series, *ANOTHER FINE MYTH*, and once they see the impossibility of their dilemma, they blip off to the dimension of Klah to round up an army. What or who they end up with is a sad group of misfits: a flying gargoyle (and his incandescent salamander), an Imp named Brockhurst (famed for its warriors), and a gremelin who is glimpsed but never seen.

The confrontations with the huge army are as wonderfully clever as the jokes and wordplays are corny. Asprin imbues his cardboard cast with feelings and character without losing the brisk pace and humor of his satire.

FIREBIRD

By Charles L. Harness
Pocket Book 83577-7; c. 1981,
first printing January 1981
\$2.25, 207 pages.

REVIEWED BY STEVE LEWIS

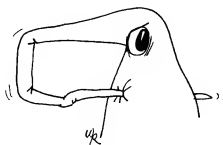
What Harness does is write mythologies of the future. This one comes complete with a star-crossed pair of lovers and a billion-year overlook at the internal workings of the universe itself. (For a startlingly similar look at the theory of Big Bangs and oscillating universes, as well as at the possibilities of black holes for traveling in time, you might also try the Marvel Comics version as related in *FANTASTIC FOUR* #229-230. You could do worse.)

Edmond Hamilton became famous for wiping out entire solar systems. In this book, the immortality of Control is nearly assured when they order the destruction of a mere 15,000 suns in a single blow. Control's dreams are shattered, however, by the voyage of the *FIREBIRD*.

To replace the mass missing from the universe, the ship and its two

passengers must travel for millions of years at nearly the speed of light. (To say this book lacks scope would be a downright lie.)

This is still what you'd have to call intelligent space opera. Lightweight, but enjoyable.



THE DEVIL'S GAME

By Paul Anderson
Pocket Books, NY, Nov. 1980.
255 pp., \$2.50. ISBN: 0-671-83689-7

UNIDENTIFIED REVIEWER

Seven people, consisting of five men and two women who feel that they are in desperate enough need of one million tax-free dollars to try anything (almost) are brought to the banana republic of Santa Ana by Sunderland Havener, an obscenely wealthy, elderly voyeur businessman. The purpose, as explained by Havener, is in the nature of a scientific experiment (???) -- survival-of-the-fittest, winner-take-all "Follow-the-Leader -- Simon-Says" type of contest. Each contestant will be Leader for a Day and can choose almost any method within sane reason for eliminating the others. Havener will follow the action through judiciously-placed bugs, videotape cameras and his ever-loyal Island servants.

Most of the people involved are mildly likable, two are standard evil, one is murdered, the murderer is eventually shot down and retribution follows at the hands of one of the players. The contests showed little in the way of ingenuity, most being physical elimination contests.

The fantasy portion appears as Samael, a disembodied voice who appeared in various guises at odd intervals to Havener, from the time he was a struggling clerk until the present scenario. Samael never 'fesses up to being either a devil, an extra-terrestrial or a schizoid portion of Havener's own personality. He is just there, giving hints of advice and making cryptic comments on the proceedings. The contest was

his idea, but for what unfathomable reason, be it salvation or destruction of the contestants' souls, we are left to ponder.

Anderson's graphic descriptions of the island paradise left my mouth watering to be there. However, his manipulation of the gamblers was uninspired and a bit contrived. Over half of the book is devoted to conversations between players and the action scenes are untypically slow for an Anderson book. It is not one of Anderson's best.

CELESTIAL CHESS

By Thomas Bontly
Ballentine/Mystery Novel, NY, 1980
263 pp., \$2.25 ISBN: 345-28678-2-225

UNIDENTIFIED REVIEWER

The cover of this well-written book says mystery, but I feel that it overlaps into the area of science if not into science fiction. The solution is a bit reminiscent of Asimov's Black Widow mysteries but much more action is involved.

The chapters alternate between two protagonists, one of whom is 800 years long dead. Our modern-day hero is David Fairchild, an assistant professor from an American University, whose interest lies in medieval manuscripts. He is visiting Cambridge University in Great Britain in hopes of looking through their collection of medieval texts for a certain poem reputedly written in 12th-Century Old English that will refute a monograph written some years earlier in which that noted author claimed that no English literature of any significance had been written for 200 years after the Norman Conquest. Fairchild hopes to make a name for himself with this scholarly coup, thus insuring his job for tenure.

Unfortunately, the Special Collection of manuscripts has suddenly become inaccessible due to the accidental death of the Librarian -- his skull was smashed by a falling of Shakespeare's Concordance. Rumor also has it that the Westchurch Manuscripts, a particular portion of the Special Collection, which David hoped to study, is haunted, and all the antecedent owners met violent deaths. He learns of a local clergyman who had an avocational interest in the history of the Westchurch manuscripts but upon visiting his home, learns that he is several weeks too late, the unfortunate man having literally been plastered into a wall by a hit-and-run driver. However, the widow loans him a copy of a book the Reverend had written on the subject. He also notes a chess board with the figures in a familiar configuration, set upon the desk.

David has long realized that the poem which he is studying apparently refers metaphorically to the game of chess, and also feels that the author of the poem was a student of St. Thomas of Becket, one Geoffrey Gervaise, who was known to be a master chess player and who was eventually burned at the stake for witchcraft. Since the Special Collections are closed, he must figure a way to get to them. It is suggested that he make the acquaintance of Professor Trevor-Finch, an Important Man at the college, a physicist and an amateur astronomer. Also the professor's family home just happens to be near the ruins of Creyppol Abbey where Gervaise was slain and whose ghost is said to haunt its environs. David does just that and is plunged into a maelstrom of ancient witchcraft and modern science.

Now to our other hero. Geoffrey Gervaise, son of a minor Norman baron, was given to the monastery at the age of 14 because his brutish, superstitious father felt he was possessed of the devil. The poor lad's crime was that of accidentally seducing his sister, Margaret, and then impaling his cousin on a pitchfork when he demanded the same of Margaret. Geoffrey was an apt pupil and the abbot taught him the game of chess as a reward for his scholastic efforts. Geoffrey became a student of Thomas of Becket and later a wandering mystic when his unfortunate mentor ascends to that Great Cathedral in the Sky. Tormented by his ever-present strong sexual urges that willing women, including Henry II's niece try to satisfy, and by the intricacies of chess -- "the scholar's whore", he calls it, Geoffrey eventually partakes of a hallucinogenic potent mixed by a local Druid and awakes, believing himself to be playing a chess game with the Devil for his immortal soul -- the best of three games. The chess board is the sky and the chess pieces correspond to certain stars in the sky. Unfortunately, for Geoffrey, a nova occurred in a critical area of the sky and before he could rescue his soul from "the Devil's mate", he is captured and burned at the stake.

How David Fairchild figures out the chess game and its starry implications both for his scholarly research on Geoffrey's unfinished poem and the saving of Professor Trevor-Finch's sanity and life from his witch-cursed family history is two hours of absorbing reading. This is a fast-paced well-written book and is highly recommended for anyone interested in mystery, astronomy and chess.

THE PEOPLE BEYOND THE WALL

By Stephen Tall
DAW, #386 (UJ1537), c. 1980, first printing, May '80, \$1.95, 204 pp.

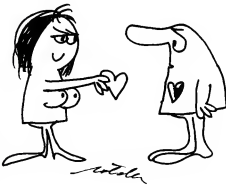
REVIEWED BY STEVE LEWIS

It begins as a novel of high adventure, taking place in the vast unexplored wastes of northern Canada, up near the Alaskan border. Two explorers find a tunnel burrowing deep under Seward Glacier. They enter and they emerge on the other side into an amazing land of utter contentment. Thanks to a previous visitor from the outside world, the natives speak English and they extend a friendly welcome.

There is no pseudo-scientific explanation given for the fact that this land of the Elkans is not part of our Earth at all. Also not explained is the remarkable metamorphosis that the inhabitants undergo as they become the "little people" beyond the wall as they prepare to die.

This is a novel about a Utopia -- all who live in this land contribute freely as their talents allow -- a Utopia that is miraculously found and one just as miraculously lost and found again.

And yet, in the end it is, I fear, entirely too marvelous to be believed.



OUTLAND

By Alan Dean Foster
Warner Books, \$2.75

REVIEWED BY DONN VICH

Another book based loosely on a cowboy movie, is OUTLAND, a novelization of a screenplay, by king of the novelizers, Alan Dean Foster. It should have stayed closer to HIGH NOON because it had a lot of interesting things going for it. Based on an asteroid orbiting Jupiter, a mining colony stands in for the frontier town of the Old Wild West.

Life there is wild and woolly and the Marshall who comes to tame the drug-pushing outlaws is on his own. The depiction of life in a mining colony rings fairly true; the details are painstakingly presented, but the drug-pushing baddies are unconvincing as is the plight of the miners.

You see, the drugs these miners seem to freely accept, eventually drive the taker psycho, and you would think that if word got around about how bad the drug is, the miners would stop buying it.

COSMIC CRUSADERS

By Pierre Barbet
Translated by Bernard Kay
and C.J. Cherryh
DAW #414, 286 pp., \$2.25

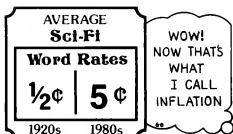
REVIEWED BY MARK WILLARD

This volume contains BAPHOMET'S METEOR (DAW 1972) and STELLAR CRUSADE, never before released in this country. CRUSADE is historical SF, an alternate-world account of an alien spacecraft crashing in medieval Europe, its highly-advanced and evil passenger assuming command and patronship of the Knights Templar, the Knights' conquest of the Holy Land and the Mongol Empire with atomic grenades and sophisticated communication, and finally (in the second half) of how the Earthmen destroy the manipulating alien, build and man a fleet of spaceships and carry their crusade to the home planet and slave empire of the despicable Baphomets.

It's a fun book! Barbet has done considerable historical research and it shows -- actual people like William of Beaujeu, Kubla Khan and Marco Polo have key roles in the story, and fit; Barbet doesn't shoe-horn in details, but unobtrusively spreads a wealth of color and background through the narrative.

The reader has to make some concessions: that the mental powers of Tibetan lamas can overwhelm alien minds, that crusader knights and medieval scholars can master extraterrestrial science and build spacecraft and armored spacesuits, that the climaxes of both the component books can be pulled out of a super-scientific hat. These concessions made, the reader will find Barbet's excursion inventive, entertaining, fast-paced, and at the end, thoughtful and challenging, as the Crusaders come to the realization that the alien races they are liberating are in no wise Christians, and perhaps should be forced to take up the true and proper faith.

Baphomet, the alien, has a tenuous historical basis; the real Knights Templar were destroyed in the 14th Century by rivals and governments for mysterious reasons; they were charged with strange heresies and worship of a demon named Baphomet. For those who like pursuing a subject, Lawrence Durrell's *MONSIEUR* is another novel with speculations on the "Templar Heresy".



THIS TIME OF DARKNESS

By H.M. Hoover
 Viking Press, 1980, 161 pp., \$9.95
 Jacket by Fran Stiles.
 ISBN: 0-670-50026-7, Order from
 The Viking Press, 625 Madison Ave.,
 New York City, NY, 10022.

REVIEWED BY FREDERICK PATTEN

This is a well-done retelling of a familiar story: the collapse of a sealed, automated, overly-regimented city and an escape into the free, natural world outside. It's seen many variations since E.M. Forster's classic "The Machine Stops" (1909), and it was done as an excellent motion picture by George Lucas in his THX-1138 (1969). Other juvenile treatments of this theme include Suzanne Martel's *THE CITY UNDERGROUND* (1964) and Andre Norton's *OUTSIDE* (1974). *THIS TIME OF DARKNESS* offers little that's new to the plot but it's a gripping rendition for young readers who aren't already familiar with it.

Hoover describes a grimly convincing future city plagued by mechanical failures and psychotic overcrowding. There is also unexpected, harsh realism in the struggles of two city-bred children to survive in a world gone totally back to nature. The story is overly simplistic in a few spots, but this is likely to bother only SF readers who are familiar with more sophisticated versions of this plot. The story is told from the viewpoint of Amy and Axel, who like many youngsters don't expect to understand the motivations of adults or the *whys* behind what they see.

THIS TIME OF DARKNESS is a good

book for young readers, 10 and up. There are enough differences between it and Norton's *OUTSIDE* that readers who enjoy one should enjoy the other. However, libraries with limited budgets will probably find either one or the other to be sufficient.

ZARSTHOR'S BANE

By Andre Norton
 Ace, #95490-1, 204 pp., \$1.95

REVIEWED BY MARK WILLARD

ZARSTHOR'S BANE is a Witch World book; Brixia, a young girl refugee from a looted holding, and her hunting cat become tangled in the fates of two other wanderers, a Lord whose brain has been addled by an injury and his scrappy young squire. They venture into a magic-blasted wasteland, where Brixia must try to understand and undo an ancient sorcerous bane.

This book is not in the same class with other Witch World titles like *YEAR OF THE UNICORN*, *TREY OF SWORDS* or *LORE OF THE WITCH WORLD*. It begins interestingly, wanders -- still interestingly -- and ends with little or nothing well-resolved. The characters are not developed, the cat does remarkable things without a shadow of an explanation for them ... etc. etc. It's minor Norton and minor Witch World -- for completists only.

GIFTWISH

By Graham Dunstan Martin
 Houghton Mifflin, 1981, 202 pp.
 \$8.95. ISBN: 0-395-30348-6. Jacket by Kristina Rodanas. Order from:
 Houghton Mifflin Co., 2 Park Street,
 Boston, MA 02107.

REVIEWED BY FREDERICK PATTEN

Here's a sprightly fantasy with which to while away a lazy afternoon. Even is a youth of 16 who comes to Cheafair in the Kingdom of Feydom to sell his goats. To his surprise he is hailed as the promised savior who will rid the land of the unnatural drought that afflicts it.

It would take a denser lad than your typical fantasy hero not to recognize a set-up when he falls into it. But a young peasant is in no position to say nay to a mayor, to the king's wizard, and to the king himself. However, if the folk of Feydom are so ready to "assist" a prophecy, why did they not do so with

one of their own boys rather than wait for a stranger? Even accepts his role of Champion with a warier eye than perhaps some had expected; luckily so, for he soon encounters treachery and actual magic. But if the danger is real, so is the friendship of the allies whom he meets and the plight of the innocent folk who need a savior, and the love of the apprentice witch who offers her powers at his service; and after all, isn't the best way out of a troubled situation to take a firm hand with it?

GIFTWISH is a magical adventure with some general similarities to Tolkien, but with a more ambitious hero than Bilbo or Frodo. Why be goatherd all your life when present-ed with an opportunity to become a Hero? With common sense and perseverance Even transforms the obvious role of scapegoat for which he was intended into that of a real savior. The tale is told with a Celtic lilt that keeps the pace tripping along, but there's drama and suspense aplenty as Even and the lovely Catchfire and the amiable wizard Capers staff lead their band of adventurers into the heartland of Blackwish the Necromancer. *GIFTWISH* was first published in Britain in 1978, and I hope that there's a sequel or two ready by now.

FIRST VOYAGES

Edited by Damon Knight, Martin H. Greenberg and Joseph D. Olander.
 Avon, 1981, 373 pp., \$2.95.

REVIEWED BY ANDREW ANDREWS

FIRST VOYAGES, the very first published stories of 20 authors, are some of the best, and most of the worst. Many authors claim they don't want to even bother reading their own stories over again, and some question even the point of publishing these early, horrific things.

Within you will find the first stories of L. Sprague de Camp, Lester del Rey, A.E. van Vogt, Robert A. Heinlein, Theodore Sturgeon, Hal Clement, Arthur C. Clarke, Poul Anderson, Judith Merril, Cordwainer Smith, Charles L. Harness, Katherine MacLean, Edgar Pangborn, Zenna Henderson, Algis Budrys, Philip K. Dick, Avram Davidson, Brian W. Aldiss, J. G. Ballard and Ursula K. LeGuin, in that order. Each story is introduced by the author. You will be surprised where the "ideas came from" and what each author likes/hates/isn't decided about each story.

THE GIRL WITH THE SILVER EYES

By Willo Davis Roberts
Atheneum, New York, 1980.
Hard cover, 180 pp., \$8.95.

REVIEWED BY NORM HARTMAN

A particularly well-written juvenile, fairly long at just under 55,000 words. The author is well-known in the mystery and suspense field, and has written several juveniles previous to this one.

The story is science fiction, the focus is on ESP. The writing is clear and precise, with no trace of 'writing down' to her teenage audience. I enjoyed it thoroughly and was sorry to see it end.

THE LAST CRIME

By John Domatilla
Atheneum, 1981, hardcover
155 pp., \$9.95

REVIEWED BY NORM HARTMAN

Set in a squalid future England, this book presents a grubby character in meaningless conflict with a drab society. The story is poorly told, and if told well would be of little or no consequence.

The author, John Domatilla, is identified as the pseudonym of an author of five published novels.

WINDHAVEN

By George R.R. Martin & Lisa Tuttle
Pocket Books (Timescape), 1981
348 pp., \$13.95.

REVIEWED BY SUSAN A. SHWARTZ

Parts of this engrossing and sensitive book have appeared as "The Flyers of Windhaven", "One-Wing" and "Falling".

Windhaven is really the story of Maris, a descendant of colonists from Earth whose ships crashed on a harsh world of islands, seacats and

scyllas in which iron is a precious metal and communication an extremely difficult necessity. Like the crew of the ship in DARKOVER LANDFALL, the Captain of the ship that brought humans to Windhaven fights to protect it. Ultimately he loses, and the metal sails are cut into the wings which enable flyers to carry messages from island to island. Since these wings are irreplaceable, each time a flyer is lost at sea, the number of messengers is diminished. And since flyers become rapidly an hereditary caste, the chances of a flyer-family spawning a child unfit to become a flyer are large. Maris, however, is a fisher-child whose only dream is of wings.

The first part of this novel deals with Maris' successful struggle to open the closed society of flyers to a system of challenges to prove who deserves wings the most. Most radical of the changes that Maris and her allies introduce are the flying academies, designed to teach people outside the flyer elite to use wings and -- presumably -- win them.

By the time of "One-Wing", the ANALOG two-parter that is the second section of this book, only one academy-trained flyer has ever won wings (and lost them the next year). This is Val, who is profoundly alienated, and who regards Maris as a sort of bewinged Aunt Tom. Nevertheless, Maris must attempt to help Val gain wings and, in so doing, be true to her own commitment as a founder of the academies. But this causes her to betray, partially, the very flyers she idolized as a child.

The last sections of the book concern Maris' maturity and the ways that she is able to use her abilities and status for the good of Windhaven. For example, flyers are messengers. Should they also be politicians? What if they are? And, as a final question, what happens to the flyers who can no longer fly?

WINDHAVEN is a powerful and lyrical book and a fine evocation both of a culture that manages -- for all its low-technology simplicity -- to be both tough and capable of growth, and of a set of personalities readers can respect and like. Maris, especially, is outstanding.

CASCA: THE ETERNAL MERCENARY

By Barry Sadler
Charter Bks, 21770-2, 246 pp., \$1.95

REVIEWED BY MARK WILLARD

CASCA is a remake of the Wandering Jew legend; in this case the

Wandering Jew is a Roman soldier condemned by Christ to live forever, plying his mercenary trade, in expiation for his brutality and callousness. This volume is "first in a new series"; in it we get flashbacks to Casca's life before the crucifixion and an account of events up to about 150 AD, with framing sequences set in the modern Vietnam War.

I'd have to say CASCA accomplishes what it seems to set out to do -- but it aims very low. It's a quick-read, no-think historical war book. There are intriguing touches and concepts, as Sadler details the mechanics of Casca's immortality and as Casca meets a Chinese traveler who instructs him in Kung Fu techniques (though this friendship turns into a silly back-slapping, name-calling business), and in the main Sadler writes competently.

There are at least two more books in the series out now (CASCA: PANZER SOLDIER is one) but I think I'll pass them by. Sadler has the right ideas, and the right literary tools, but is not handling them to their greatest effect.

WRITING FOR THE TWILIGHT ZONE

By George Clayton Johnson
Outre' House, 7 1/2 X 10 1/2" Paper, \$7.50; Limited Edition Cloth, \$30.00, 130 pp., Outre' House, 1622 N Street, #302, Sacramento, CA, 95814. ISBN: 0-9605404-7

REVIEWED BY JAMES J.J. WILSON

George Clayton Johnson scripted four episodes of the original Twilight Zone television series. This book consists of actual reproductions of these four teleplays.

The four stories included are "A Penny for Your Thoughts", the story of a typically meek accountant who, after being hit by a car, suddenly obtains the ability to read people's minds; "Nothing in the Dark", about an old woman who believes that death is a person and that she can avoid him/it by staying locked in her room; "The Pool Player", a variation on Walter Tevis's "The Hustler" only, in this case, the young challenger stakes his life on a game with a long-dead master; and "Kick the Can" in which a man believes he can become young again by playing a game he played when he was a child.

Aside from the fact that these are highly entertaining stories, this book may be valuable to someone interested in learning how to write for television. This is television script-writing at its best.



THE HUMAN HOTLINE

S-F NEWS BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

REMEMBER THE ADDRESS FOR THIS COLUMN IS: ELTON T. ELLIOTT, SFR, 1899 WIESSNER DRIVE N.E., SALEM, OR 97303.
PHONE: (503) 390-6753

COMMENTARY:

In a recession cash and jobs are tight; people spend their money on essentials, such as food. Therefore, bookstores have fewer sales and pay later, if at all, to wholesalers, warehouses and distributors, who in turn are slow to pay publishers, who find that royalty time is cash-crunch time. Some publishers have problems paying overhead, others buy no books during royalty-paying time, others pay royalties slowly; if they pay at all. Banks formerly advertised in PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY cheap interest rates to publishers so they could meet their payments; now thanks to the tight money policy of Paul Volcker at the Federal Reserve Board, publishers pay 18% interest to borrow, compared to one-third of that several years ago. Publishers are making changes: Gone are the days when the publisher paid advances of one-half on signing the contract and the other half on receipt of the manuscript -- more often a contract pays the author one-third on signing the contract, one-third on receipt of the manuscript, and one-third on publication. Not every publisher is in financial difficulties; some like to keep money in high-interest money market mutual funds for as long as they can, and not every publisher employs the one-third plan.

MAGAZINE NEWS:

AMAZING:

AMAZING STORIES, the oldest sci-

ence fiction magazine in existence (first issue in April 1926), is up for sale. Owner, Arthur Bernhard, wishes to retire in 1982 at the age of 70, and would like to sell publishing control in the magazine before then, for an orderly ownership change-over.

AMAZING's sales are about 15,000 on the newsstands and 600+ through subscriptions, according to the January issue, the latest for which complete figures are available. Reportedly ANALOG and ASIMOV'S sell around 20,000 on the newsstands, but sell many more subscriptions than does AMAZING. An aggressive publisher could greatly increase subscriptions. Publisher Jonathan Post is heading a group currently negotiating for AMAZING's purchase. Mr. Post says that the "editorial and managing staffs have been chosen, but are yet to be announced pending purchase of the magazine".

ANALOG & ASIMOV'S:

Are both being published thirteen times yearly.

FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION:

Appears monthly.

FANTASY BOOK:

Their first issue is out. The first two issues were quarterly but will go bimonthly with the third issue this December. Forrest J. Ackerman will contribute one story per issue under the auspices of a Fantasy Classics column. Each story will be a reprint from the past, the first

story to be "Borderland" by Arthur J. Burks.

GALAXY:

Last issue was published over a year ago, but according to owner Vincent McCaffrey, a local Boston group is planning to buy and publish it.

OMNI:

Their former Fiction Editor, Robert Shekley, resigned to resume full-time writing. A letter from new OMNI Fiction Editor, Ellen Datlow, formerly OMNI Associate Fiction Editor, comments on our column in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #40: "I read your column in the Fall SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (#40) with interest, especially your comments on OMNI. Fiction at OMNI is alive and well. The possible development of an exclusively science fiction magazine by the publishers has no bearing on either the presence or the amount of fiction published in OMNI. OMNI has been quite successful, being the only glossy that combines science and fiction and graphics into one package. The publishers are not going to mess with that enormously successful formula. The reason OMNI has run fewer fiction stories in the last year is that we now run two pictorials a month: one fact, one fiction -- and the publisher wants to keep a balance between science fact, science fiction and pictorials".

QUEST/STAR:

Published nine times yearly. The latest issue is with H.L. Gold as Fiction Editor.



RIGEL:

Bimonthly.

SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST:

The first bimonthly issue is out.

SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS:

Bimonthly. The first issue, dated April, is set for February release. Tentative contents:

THE ALIEN UPSTAIRS...by Pamela Sargent
THE IDENTITY MATRIX.....by Jack L. Chalker

SUBSPACE ENCOUNTER.....by E.E. "Doc" Smith
STRANGER SUNS...By George Zebrowski

SUBSPACE ENCOUNTER is the latest science fiction "Doc" Smith actually wrote; his other only unpublished fiction is a who-dunnit mystery. SUBSPACE ENCOUNTER was discovered among Smith's items by Lloyd Arthur Eshbach, who published Smith in hard covers for Fantasy Press.

SF BOOKLINE:

Bimonthly -- the issue dated March is set for January release. On hand is material by A.E. van Vogt, Sandra Miesel, Lloyd Eshbach and Jessica Salmonson.

PUBLISHING NEWS:

Simon & Schuster is rumored up for sale for a reported \$50 million.

Dodd Mead is up for sale, with an asking price of \$6 million.

Rumor has it that Dell plans to return to science fiction within the next year or so, as soon as they can unload the remnants of Jim Frenkel's tenure. This could explain why they are giving such a tough time to some science fiction authors -- they want a clean slate (see article on potential Benford lawsuit in this column).

F&SF and Scribner's are starting a co-publishing venture. Editor Edward L. Ferman, is looking primarily for novels. There will be no set number of titles and publication will be on a book-by-book basis. He is interested in seeing material by F&SF authors.

A new distribution combine has been formed. Hal Schuster, sales director of New Media Irjax, says "The International Association for Direct Distribution, an association of direct market distributors was formed at the 1981 Worldcon. The officers are:

President..... Bill Schanes
Vice-President.....Bud Plant
Treasurer..... Bill Kruttschnitt
Secretary.....Nanette Rozanski

In an exclusive interview with Hal Schuster, he described the organization's purpose: "enhancing the position of all businesses involved in the direct marketing of publica-

tions and furthering the general public recognition of the market". He expects by the end of the year that all direct comic book distributors will be members.

AUTHOR NEWS:

BENFORD -- DELL LAWSUIT POSSIBLE

Contrary to reports in LOCUS and SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE, Gregory Benford has not sold the Starscape trilogy to Simon & Schuster -- Dell has threatened suit if he does.

In an exclusive interview, Benford told us that "everything is log-jammed. I'm the biggest log that is jamming ..." because Benford's books involve the highest amount of money. He continues that Dell is trying to extract the maximum amount of money from the authors before they will release the properties from threat of lawsuit upon resale, and mentions that none of the authors involved have resold their books.

Other authors involved, mentioned by several sources: Donald Kingsbury, David Gerrold, Marta Randall and Richard Lupoff.

Benford related that Dell originally sent a letter demanding \$10,000 or they would sue, but since they've "sent conflicting opinions", they have also tried to block all publication of the book, and when Benford's agent, Richard Curtis said they couldn't do that, the lawyers (which by the way, are Double-day lawyers, not Dell lawyers) didn't respond.

He said that at one point they wanted 10% and when Benford acceded, they changed to 50%.

Informed legal opinion has advised Benford that Dell hasn't a legal leg to stand on, and according to Benford, Dell has already violated two of the contract clauses under which he sold them IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT, ACROSS THE SEA OF SUNS and STARScape, and that violation of either clause kills the rights to all three books. The two violations are: (1) They must accept or reject a book within a specified time, and (2) All of the books have out-of-print clauses, that if a book is out of print for a certain period of time rights revert back to the author (Benford maintains their violation was by letting IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT go out of print).

The issues at stake here, Benford said, have ramifications far larger than just this case, "What they (the publishers) want is freedom of movement in case a program fails; if they lose in court, that would establish a precedent" the publishers

don't want. Benford said it is a "battle over whether the authors can be held responsible" for the losses a publisher might incur under a failed program". Benford related that the SPWA is considering a class action lawsuit against Dell. Benford said that he prefers not to go to court, that he doesn't "want to tie up these three books" and any court action "could take three years or more".

The books will have foreign editions. Benford said that he is glad he retained foreign rights. I inquired about IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT, whose original publisher, Dial/James Wade Books, retained all rights as part of the Quantum Program. He replied that because the Quantum Program is dead the foreign rights are freed up. He said that you could see American authors, whose books are tied up because of the legal problems, publish some titles overseas. Benford is continuing work on the final draft of ACROSS THE SEA OF SUNS.

GEIS NOTE: The above news story and its implications is important to sf authors, publishers, readers and fans. Yet to my knowledge this is the only place you'll read it because of its alleged "controversial" nature. That often means an offended sf publisher might cut off advertising.

SFR does not accept advertising.

Michael Resnick has just sold WALPURGIS III to New American Library for publication in June of 1982. He is currently completing a mystery novel, DOG IN THE MANGER, then will send another science fiction novel, SIDSHOW.

Del Rey Books announced that they have purchased the rights to the sequel to 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, for a seven-figure advance. Author Arthur C. Clarke who often said that he was retired, will call it 2010: ODYSSEY TWO. In an interview in the September SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE, Clarke mentioned that the manuscript



wasn't due until June 1983, contradicting the Del Rey publicity material which mentioned a tentative November 1982 date. "We are particularly proud to be publishing Arthur's 2010: ODYSSEY TWO in 1982", said Judy-Lynn del Rey, "since that year marks our fifth anniversary as the science fiction and fantasy imprint of Ballantine Books."

The book will be made into a movie, directed by Stanley Kubrick.

Alexis A. Gilliland has just finished the PIRATES OF ROSINANTE.

Jack Dann has completed a novel THE MAN WHO MELTED. He has sold to Ace an anthology, UNICORNS, co-edited by Gardner Dozois. Mr. Dann is currently working on two novels, one of which is not science fiction.

Berkley Books has purchased THE TALISMAN by Peter Straub and Stephen King, the advance rumored to be between one and two million dollars.

Larry Niven and Jerry E. Pournelle have sold a novel, THE FOOT, to Fawcett for an advance rumored to be around \$600,000. They have also sold a sequel to THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE, titled THE MOAT AROUND MURCHISON'S EYE, reportedly sold to Simon & Schuster for half a million dollars. Niven has sold THE SMOKE RING to Del Rey Books for \$100,000, a story about a natural Ringworld-like structure. Niven is collaborating with Steven Barnes on THE DESCENT OF ANANSI for Tor Books.

Harlan Ellison has a new agent, Richard Curtis. Ellison has reached agreement with Ace Books on BLOOD'S A ROVER, which will be published elsewhere.

Stephen Goldin has turned in MINDESEARCH and MINDWAR to Fawcett. Both are sequels to MINDFLIGHT.

Harry Harrison has turned in THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT FOR PRESTIDENT to Bantam.

Walter Tevis has turned in his new science fiction novel, BELSON REBORN, to Doubleday.

Orson Scott Card has moved to Indiana and gone back to school at Notre Dame for his Ph. D.

Robert A. Heinlein has sold his novel, FRIDAY, to Fawcett for over half a million. Holt will do the hardcover, in early summer of '82.

Dan Henderson has sold a book, PARADISE, to Tor.

Phyllis Ann Carr has sold, IDYLS OF THE QUEEN, a King Arthur murder mystery, to Ace.

Dean Ing has sold SINGLE COMBAT, a sequel to SYSTEMIC SHOCK to Tor, and PULLING THROUGH, to Ace.

Kate Wilhelm has two books com-

ing from Houghton Mifflin, LISTEN, LISTEN, a story collection and OH, SUSANNAH, a novel. JUNIPER TIME has won the Prix Apollo for 1981.

Lee Hoffman is writing romances for Fawcett under the pseudonym Georgia York.

Lynn Abbey has sold the third book in her fantasy series to Ace. The first novel was THE BLACK FLAME.

L. Sprague de Camp has sold a new Krishna novel, THE PRISONER OF ZAMANACK, to Ace.

MOVIE/TV NEWS:

Walt Disney is producing TRON, set for summer '82 premier, billed as "an electronic mythology, a motion picture which is making unprecedented use of computer animation and light effects to create an entirely new fantasy world", according to a press release by Disney Productions.

International Creative Management, one of the top two talent agencies in the country, has sued George Lucas for packaging commissions it claimed Lucas owed it for THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. It received \$10 million for packaging rights to STAR WARS, but hasn't received a cent from THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK.

Richard Marquand will direct THE REVENGE OF THE JEDI. George Lucas was impressed with his job on EYE OF THE NEEDLE. REVENGE will begin filming in January '82 and be released May 26, 1983.

Lucas has revealed that RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK is part III of a planned trilogy, thus the Lucas tradition of starting at anywhere but the beginning of his cinematic trilogies continues. STAR WARS was the fourth part of a projected nine episodes. After REVENGE is completed Lucas plans to shoot the first three episodes, then the final three.

Alfred Bester's THE DEMOLISHED MAN, will finally be brought to the screen for CBS Theatrical Films by Oliver Stone.

Universal is remaking THE THING, to be directed by John Carpenter whose latest movie was ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK. The original movie, THE THING FROM OUTER SPACE, and its remake are based on the classic novel, "Who Goes There" by John W. Campbell Jr.

The name of the movie based on Philip K. Dick's DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP? is BLADE RUNNER. It stars Harrison Ford and is being produced by the Ladd Company, whose founder Alan Ladd Jr., backed Lucas' STAR WARS, when Ladd was President

of 20th Century Fox. BLADE RUNNER will be directed by Ridley Scott of ALIEN fame.

Satire hits the screen with Leslie Nielsen, who recently starred in AIRPLANE, the air disaster spoof film. He played the spaceship captain in FORBIDDEN PLANET, signing to play the spaceship commander in THE CREATURE WASN'T NICE, a spoof of space horror films.

Tobe Hooper, who gained fame as director of the TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRES, has signed to direct POLTERGEIST for MGM. Steven Spielberg wrote the script and will executive produce the science fiction horror movie.

David Lynch is to direct DUNE. Ridley Scott was Dino De Laurentiis/Universal's top choice, but he had prior commitments.

Ron Shusett and Dan O'Bannon, co-scriptwriters of ALIEN, are now collaborating on TOTAL RECALL, a science fiction movie from Walt Disney studios.

Douglas Trumbull will direct MILLENNIUM, based on John Varley's script adaptation of his short story "Air Raid".

Paramount has decided to release the new Star Trek movie as a feature film. Shatner and Nimoy have both signed to do it.

Lawsuits: A former official of the Worldwide Church of God has filed for \$110 million against the makers of RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK, charging that his ideas were stolen and "trivialized and secularized".

Son of Lawsuits: The Edgar Rice Burroughs estate got a court order, following their suit against the Dereks' TARZAN THE APPEMAN, for copyright infringement. Their principle objection was the nudity in the film, especially scenes showing Bo Derek wrestling topless with an orangutan, and having her nude body painted for a native ritual. According to reports, the judge at the hearing censured the film by drawing a grease pencil through the parts the judge deemed offensive.



AWARDS, AWARDS, AWARDS, AWARDS:

HUGO AWARDS:

Novel: THE SNOW QUEEN. Joan D. Vinge
 Novella: "The Lost Dorsai"
 Gordon R. Dickson
 Novelette: "The Cloak and the Staff"
 Gordon R. Dickson
 Short Story: "The Grotto of the
 Dancing Bear"
 Clifford D. Simak
 Non-Fiction Book: COSMOS
 Carl Sagan

Editor: Edward L. Ferman
 Artist: Michael Whelan
 Dramatic Presentation: "The Empire
 Strikes Back"

Fanzine: LOCUS
 Fan Writer: Susan Wood
 Fan Artist: Victoria Poyser
 John W. Campbell Award

for New Writers: Somtow Sucharitkul
 Gandalf Award: C.L. Moore

Note: Gordon R. Dickson's two Hugos mark only the second time that an author has been so recognized for fiction. Last year George R.R. Martin became the first for "Sandkings" and "The Way of Cross and Dragon".

JOHN W. CAMPBELL, JR. MEMORIAL AWARD:

Awarded First: TIMESCAPE
 By Gregory Benford
 Awarded Second: THE DREAMING
 DRAGONS
 by Damien Broderick
 Awarded Third: THE SHADOW OF
 THE TORTURER
 by Gene Wolfe
 (All 3 published by Simon & Schuster/
 Pocket)

Note: TIMESCAPE has won every major award this year except the Hugo.

Rick Sternbach won an Emmy for his astronomical art on COSMOS: The Shores of the Cosmic Ocean.

Prometheus, the Libertarian Science Fiction Award, has been suspended.

LETTER FROM NEAL WILGUS

Box 25771
 Albuquerque, NM 87125
 September 17, 1981

"I'm surprised I haven't seen a notice in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW about the passing of J. Vernon Shea, who died in Cleveland February 1, 1981, of a heart attack. SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW readers shouldn't have to be told that Shea was a member of the Lovecraft circle in the 1930s, that he was a contributor to the Cthulhu myths, that he was editor of OUTRE, one of the better zines in the Esoteric Order of Dagon APA. Shea's many correspondents will especially miss him and a Shea memorial issue of Mollie Werba's EOD zine

NIGHT GAUNTS has already been published. At least two books have already been dedicated to Shea -- Robert Bloch's THE MYSTERIES OF THE WORM (Bloch's collected Cthulhu stories) and Keith Allen Daniel's WEIRD NETS, for which Shea wrote an introduction just a few days before his death. Shea was a devoted fantasy fan and an amateur pressman who carried on the Lovecraft tradition in fine spirit. He will be irreplaceable."

ACADEMIC AND SMALL PRESS NEWS:

BURNING BUSH PUBLICATIONS:

Published the second issue of a scholarly magazine, PHILOSOPHICAL SPECULATIONS IN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY to appear quarterly. Next issue should be out this fall.

CAT'S GOD:

339 Newbury Street
 Boston, MA 02115

Published a limited chapbook edition of 250 copies of "Rehearsal Night" by Frank Belknap Long.

CROWN:

The Clarkson, Potter Inc. division of Crown will publish SCIENCE FICTION PUZZLE TALES by Martin Gardner, a collection of short puzzle stories which have appeared in ASIMOV'S magazine since its premier.

PROMETHEUS:

Published SCIENCE GOOD, BAD AND BOGUS by Martin Gardner, a collection of essays about science and pseudoscience.

OTHERGATES:

--A guide for writers and artists to markets for science fiction, fantasy, horror, suspense and mystery and related genres.

Millie Kenin is compiling information for OTHERGATES, an annual book-format guide with quarterly or possibly bi-monthly updates to subscribers. Listings of anthologies and publishers of books, chapbooks, portfolios etc. are currently being compiled for the third issue. For more info write: Millie Kenin, 1025 55th Street, Oakland, CA 94608

SHANES AND SHANES:

4887 Ronson Court, Suite E
 San Diego, CA 92111

Just published, a book, PAPERBACKS, U.S.A.: A GRAPHIC HISTORY, 1939-1959.

UNGAR:

The Frederik Ungar Publishing

Company is considering new booklength non-fiction studies of the works of major science fiction writers, to be added to its Recognitions Series. Published already are studies of Ray Bradbury and Frank Herbert, with books on Ursula K. Le Guin, Fritz Leiber and others scheduled. Those interested can send me to:

Tom Staicar, SF General Editor
 RECOGNITIONS
 1515 Pine Valley Blvd., #2B
 Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Staicar writes, "My two collections of essays for the series are closed at this point. CRITICAL ENCOUNTERS II will include essays on Cherryh, McIntyre, Zelazny, Silverberg and others. THE FEMININE EYE, a book devoted exclusively to women SF writers' works, will examine the writings of Norton, Russ, Bradley, Tiptree, Lynn and others. My own book-length study of Fritz Leiber (which has his cooperation, including lengthy interview material) will be published next year (as will the two collections)."

BOOK NEWS:

ACE:

November:

Jack Vance THE DOGTOWN TOURIST
 AGENCY
 Dennis Schmidt SATORI
 Keith Taylor BARD
 Edward Ferman (Ed.) THE BEST FROM
 ... FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION
 Gregory Benford & Gordon Eklund
 IF THE STARS ARE GODS
 James H. Schmitz THE WITCHES
 OF KARRIES
 Chelsea Quinn Yarbro TIME OF THE
 FOURTH HORSEMAN
 Poul Anderson THE NIGHTFACE
 Andre Norton SARGASSO OF SPACE
 Dennis Schmidt WAY-FARER
 Dennis Schmidt KENSHO

December:

William Tuning FUZZY BONES
 (Third in Fuzzy Series created by
 H. Beam Piper.)
 Gordon R. Dickson IN IRON YEARS
 (Short Story collection.)
 Greg Bear STRENGTH OF STONES,
 FLESH OF BRASS
 Andre Norton VOORLOPER
 Andre Norton SECRET OF THE LOST REE
 Jack Vance THE DRAGON MASTERS
 Gene Wolfe THE DEVIL IN A FOREST
 Roger Zelazny MADMAN
 (Sequel to CHANGELING)
 David C. Smith & Richard Tiemeley
 RED SONJA #1: THE RING OF IKRIHU
 Poul Anderson THE LONG WAY HOME
 James H. Schmitz THE DEMON BREED

January:

Rudy Rucker SOFTWARE
 H. Beam Piper & Michael Kurland
 FIRST CYCLE

Cynthia Felice & Connie Willis WATER WITCH
 G. Harry Stine THE SPACE
 ENTERPRISE
 Philip Jose Farmer THE LAVALITE
 WORLD
 (Fifth in World of Tiers Series)
 Robert E. Howard THE IRON MAN/
 THE ADVENTURES OF DENNIS DORGAN
 R.A. Lafferty NINE HUNDRED
 GRANDMOTHERS
 Poul Anderson THE PEREGRINE
 Ursula K. Le Guin PLANET OF EXILE
 Andre Norton LAVENDER-GREEN MAGIC
 Edgar Rice Burroughs AT THE
 EARTH'S CORE
 " BACK TO THE STONE AGE
 " LAND OF TERROR
 " PELLUCIDAR
 " SAVAGE PELLUCIDAR
 " TANAR OF PELLUCIDAR
 " TARZAN
 AT THE EARTH'S CORE

AVON:

November:
 James Blish TITAN'S DAUGHTER
 December: (No titles)
 January:
 Stanislaw Lem MORTAL ENGINES

BANTAM:

November:
 Robert Charles FLOWERS OF EVIL
 Russel Griffin CENTURY'S END
 Robert Nye MERLIN
 December:
 Frederik Pohl SYZYGY
 Forrest J. Ackerman (Ed.) GOSH! WON!
 .. (SENSE OF WONDER) SCIENCE FICTION

January:

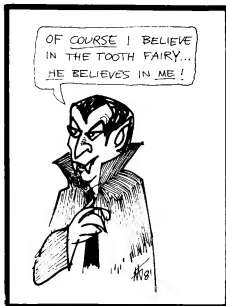
Mike McQuay MATTHEW SWAIN:
 THE DEADLIEST SHOW IN TOWN
 Elizabeth Scarborough SONG OF
 SORCERY
 Samuel R. Delany THE JEWELS OF APTOR
 " THE BALLAD OF BETA-2
 " THE FALL OF THE TOWERS
 " THE EINSTEIN
 INTERSECTION
 " BABEL 17

BERKLEY

November:
 Ursula K. Le Guin THE WORD FOR
 WORLD IS FOREST
 Richard Monaco THE FINAL QUEST
 Charles L. Grant THE GLOW OF
 CANDLES AND OTHER STORIES
 December:
 Damon Knight THE WORLD AND THORRIN
 Arthur C. Clarke DOLPHIN ISLAND
 Poul Anderson THE DARK BETWEEN
 THE STARS
 January:
 Eric Van Lustbader BENEATH AN OPAL
 MOON
 Avram Davidson THE AVRAM
 DAVIDSON OMNIBUS
 Frederik Pohl PLANETS THREE

DAW:

November:
 Jo Clayton THE NOWHERE HUNT
 Doris Piserchia EARTH IN TWILIGHT
 Charles R. Saunders IMARO
 John Brunner INTERSTELLAR EMPIRE
 December:
 M.A. Foster THE MORPHODITE
 Isaac Asimov & Martin H. Greenberg,
 Editors
 ISAAC ASIMOV PRESENTS THE GREAT
 SCIENCE FICTION STORIES: 6 (1944)
 Gray Prescott ALLIES OF ANTAARES
 Tanith Lee THE BIRTHGRAVE
 Donald A. Wollheim, Ed. WOLLHEIM'S
 WORLD'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION:
 SERIES FIVE
 January:
 C.J. Cherryh THE PRIDE OF CHANUR
 A.E. van Vogt THE SILKIE
 Neal Barrett, Jr. ALDAIR:
 THE LEGION OF BEASTS
 Ron Goulart UPSIDE DOWNSIDE
 A.E. van Vogt PENDULUM



DEL REY

November:
 Katherine Kurtz CAMBER THE HERETIC
 (Concluding volume in Camber Trilogy)
 Patricia Wrightson THE ICE IS COMING
 Lester Del Rey POLICE YOUR PLANET
 Alan Gardner RED SHIFT
 Poul Anderson THE BROKEN SWORD
 Hal Clement ICEWORLD
 December:
 Paul O. Williams THE DOME
 IN THE FOREST
 Frank Herbert UNDER PRESSURE
 Patricia Wrightson THE DARK
 BRIGHT WATER
 James White TOMORROW IS TOO FAR
 James Tiptree, Jr. OUT OF THE
 EVERYWHERE AND OTHER EXTRAORDINARY
 VISIONS
 E.R. Edisson THE WORM OUBOUBOIS
 January:
 Piers Anthony CENTAUR ISLE

H.P. Lovecraft AT THE MOUNTAINS
 OF MADNESS
 H.P. Lovecraft THE TOMB
 Jack L. Chalker CEREBERUS:
 A WOLF IN THE FOLD
 (Second in Four Lords of the
 Diamond Tetralogy)
 Lee Killough ADVENTINE
 Available in October, two tradesize
 paperbackbacks:
 Theodore Sturgeon MORE THAN HUMAN
 Frank Herbert UNDER PRESSURE

DOUBLEDAY:

November:
 Jack Dann (Ed.) MORE WANDERING STARS
 Thomas F. Monteleone OZYMANDIAS
 Walter Gibson THE SHADOW:
 JADE DRAGON & HOUSE OF GHOSTS
 December:
 Manly Wade Wellman THE LOST AND
 THE LURKING
 Isidore Haiblum THE TSADDIC OF
 THE SEVEN WONDERS
 January:
 Gary Allen Ruse THE GODS OF CERUS
 MAJOR

PLAYBOY:

November:
 Frederik Pohl, Editor GALAXY #1
 December:
 Frederik Pohl, Editor GALAXY #2
 Ron Goulart STAR HAWKS II
 (Originally scheduled for Oct. '81)
 January:
 Robert Vardeman & Vic Milan THE
 FALLEN ONES: WAR OF POWERS #4

SIGNET:

November: No titles.
 December:
 Irwin & Love (Eds) THE BEST
 OF TREK IV
 Arthur C. Clarke THE SANDS OF MARS
 January:
 Zach Hughes THUNDERWORLD

STARBLAZE:

November:
 Somtow Sucharitkul MALLWORLD
 (A related story collection;
 includes original unpublished story,
 "Jaws of Mallworld")
 December:
 Mark Clifton & Frank Riley THEY'D
 RATHER BE RIGHT
 Upcoming titles include: FOR-
 REST J. ACKERMAN PRESENTS MR. MONS-
 TER'S MOVIE GOLD (with over 250 rare
 never-before-published cinema stills
 and posters); Hank Stine is editing
 an anthology of articles on fantasy-
 role playing, a reprint anthology.
 Stine will get most of his material
 from gaming magazines and is paying
 1¢-2¢ per word against a pro-rated

BACK ISSUES

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WELL-KNOWN SF & FANTASY WRITERS,
EDITORS, PUBLISHERS AND FANS.

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FEATURED CONTRIBUTIONS

THE ALIEN CRITIC #5 Interview
with Fritz Leiber; "The Literary
Dreamers" by James Blish; "Irvin
Binkin Meets H.P. Lovecraft" by
Jack Chalker.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #6 Interview
with R.A. Lafferty; "The Tren-
chant Bludgeon" by Ted White;
"Translations From the Editorial"
by Marion Z. Bradley.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #9 "Reading
Heinlein Subjectively" by Alexei
and Cory Panshin; "Written to a
Pulp!" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; "The Shav-
er Papers" by Richard S. Shaver.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #10 Interview
with Stanislaw Lem; "A Nest of
Strange and Wonderful Birds" by
Sam Merwin, Jr.; Robert Bloch's
Guest of Honor speech; The Hein-
lein Reaction.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #14 Inter-
view with Philip Jose Farmer;
"Thoughts on Logan's Run" by Wil-
iam F. Nolan; "The Gimlet Eye" by
John Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #15 Inter-
view with L. Sprague de Camp;
"Spec-Fic and the Perry Rhodan
Ghetto" by Donald C. Thompson;
"Uffish Thots" by Ted White.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #16 Inter-
view with Jerry Pournelle; "The
True and Terrible History of Sci-
ence Fiction" by Barry Malzberg;
"Noise Level" by John Brunner;
"The Literary Masochist" by Rich-
ard Lupoff.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #17 Inter-
view with George R.R. Martin; In-
terview with Robert Anton Wilson;
"Philip K. Dick: A parallax View"
by Terrence M. Green; "Microcos-
mos" by R. Faraday Nelson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #18 Inter-
view with Lester del Rey; Inter-
view with Alan Burt Akers; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; "A Short
One for the Boys in the Back Room"
by Barry Malzberg.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #19 Inter-
view with Philip K. Dick; Interview
with Frank Kelly Freas; "The Note-
books of Mack Sikes" by Larry Niven;
"Angel Fear" by Preff; "The Vivi-
sector" by Darrell Schweitzer.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #20 Inter-
views: Theodore Sturgeon, and Joe
Haldeman; "Noise Level" by John
Brunner; "The Vivisector" by Dar-
rell Schweitzer; "The Gimlet Eye"
by John Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #21 Inter-
view with Leigh Brackett & Edmond
Hamilton; Interview with Tim Kirk;
"The Dream Quarter" by Barry Mal-
zberg; "Noise Level" by John Brunner.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #22 Inter-
view with John Varley; "S-F and
S-E-X" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "After-
thoughts on Logan's Run" by William
F. Nolan; "An Evolution of Cons-
ciousness" by Marion Zimmer Bradley.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #23 Inter-
views: A.E. van Vogt, and Jack
Vance, and Piers Anthony; "The
Silverberg That Was" by Robert
Silverberg.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #24 Inter-
views: Bob Shaw, David G. Hartwell
and Algis Budrys; "On Being a Bit
of a Legend" by Algis Budrys.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #25 Inter-
views with George Scithers, Paul
Anderson and Ursula K. Le Guin;
"Flying Saucers and the Stymie
Factor" by Ray Palmer; ONE IMMORTAL
MAN--Part One.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #26 Inter-
views with Gordon R. Dickson and
Larry Niven; "Noise Level" by
John Brunner; "Fee-don Road" by
Richard Henry Klump; ONE IMMORTAL
MAN--Part Two.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #27 Inter-
views with Ben Bova and Stephen
Fabian; "Should Writers be Serfs
...or Slaves?"; SF News; SF Film
News; The Ackerman Interview; ONE
IMMORTAL MAN--Part Three.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #28 Inter-
view with C.J. Cherryh; "Beyond
Genocide" by Damon Knight; ONE IM-
MORTAL MAN--Conclusion; SF News;
SF Film News & Reviews.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #29 Inter-
views with John Brunner, Michael
Moorcock, and Hank Stine; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; SF News;
SF Film News & Reviews.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #30 Inter-
views with Joan D. Vinge, Stephen
R. Donaldson, and Norman Spinrad;
"The Awards are Coming" by Orson
Scott Card; SF News; SF Film News
& Reviews.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #31 Inter-
view with Andrew J. Offutt; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; "On the
Edge of Futuria" by Ray Nelson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #32 Inter-
view with Andrew J. Offutt--Part
Two; Interview with Orson Scott
Card; "You Got No Friends in This
World" by Orson Scott Card; "The
Human Hotline" by Elton T. Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #33 Inter-
view with Charles Sheffield; "A
Writer's Natural Enemy--Editors"
by George R. R. Martin; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #35 Inter-
views with Fred Saberhagen and Don
Wollheim; "The Way It Is" by Barry
Malzberg; "Noise Level" by John
Brunner; "Coming Apart at the
Themes" by Bob Shaw.



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CONCLUDING WORDS:

Well, that's it for this issue. I'll have interesting news for the next column -- until then, have a good holiday season!

LAST MINUTE NEWS

Thaddeus Diky and Elton T. Elliott of SF Productions have severed their relationship with New Media Publishing. SF Productions' address: POB 2050, Salem, OR 97308. Details next issue.



ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P. 7

We come now, in faithful ritual, to that list of book reviews in hand, so that reviewers may know what not to review for SFR. It is long, and I have only five column inches to use.

AT THE EYE OF THE ECLIPSE
NOTES TO A SF WRITER
THE ENTROPY EFFECT
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HELLO AMERICA and many more.

Have a happy holiday season.

TEN YEARS AGO IN SF -- FALL, 1971

By Robert Sabella

Ben Bova took over the reins of ANALOG for what would prove to be a successful seven-year tenure. He expanded the magazine's limits considerably, discovered such writers as George R.R. Martin and Joan Vinge and won six Hugo Awards as Best Editor ... Donald Wollheim quit as editor of Ace Books because of dissatisfaction with the new owners. He announced the formation of DAW Books which would be published by himself and distributed by New American Library ... Frederic Pohl was named editor of Ace Books, replacing Wollheim ... Philip Wylie died at the age of 69. He was the co-author of WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE and AFTER WORLDS COLLIDE with Edwin Balmer ... Notable books published included NEW DIMENSIONS 1 (edited by Robert Silverberg), TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO (by Phillip Jose Farmer) and DRIFT-GLASS (by Samuel R. Delany) ... THE TOMBS OF ATUAN (by Ursula K. Le Guin) was published by Atheneum as a juvenile. It would win the Newberry Award.



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